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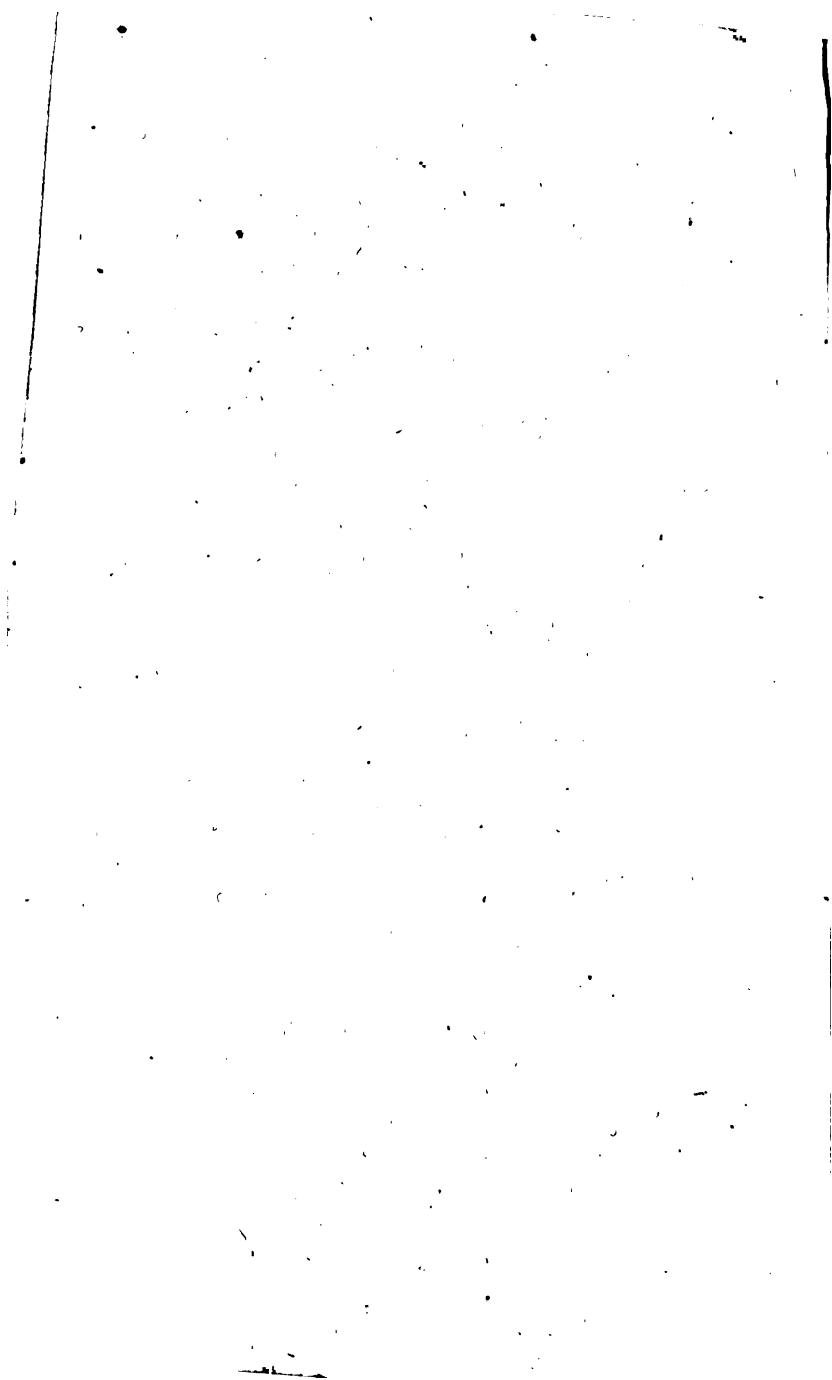


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Dabney to the
Porcellian Society

1857



SIMPLE TALES.



BY MRS OPIE.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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SIMPLE TALES.

THE BLACK VELVET PELISSE.

MR BERESFORD was a merchant, engaged in a very extensive business, and possessed of considerable property, a great part of which was vested in a large estate in the country, on which he chiefly resided.

Beresford was what is commonly denominated *purse-proud*; and so eager to be honored upon account of his wealth, that he shunned rather than courted the society of men of rank, as he was fond of power and precedence, and did not like to associate with those who had an indisputable claim to that deference of which he himself was desirous. But he earnestly wished that his only child and heiress should marry a man of rank; and being informed that a young baronet of large estates in his neighborhood, and who was also heir to a barony, was just returned from his travels, and intended to settle at his paternal seat, Mr Beresford was resolved that Julia should have every possible opportunity of showing off to the best advantage before so desirable a neighbor; and he determined that his daughter, his house, and his table, should not want any charm which money could procure.

Beresford had gained his fortune by degrees; and having been educated by frugal and retired parents, his habits were almost parsimonious; and when he launch-

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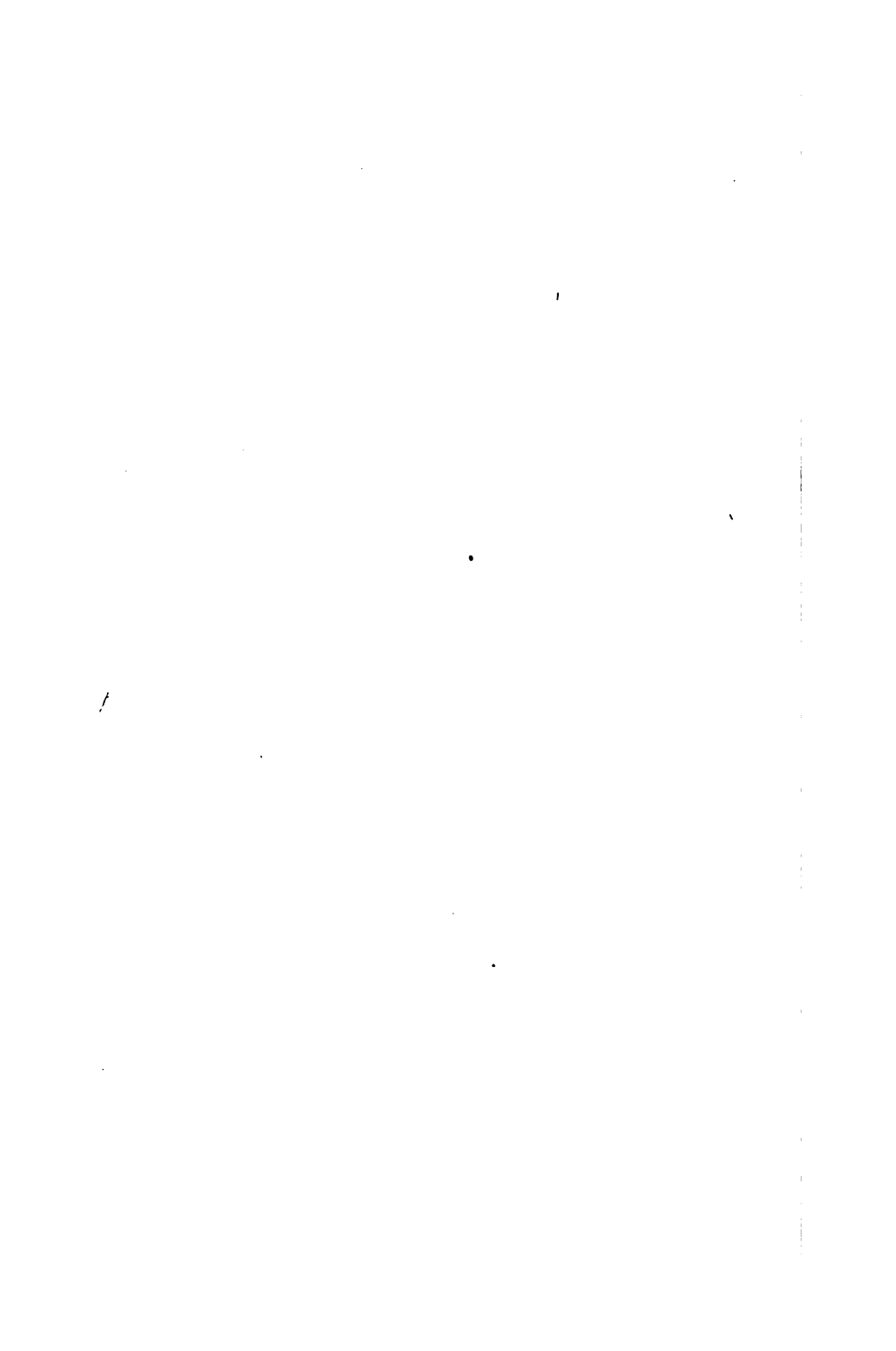


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1897



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contemplated with fearful admiration the elegant cloaks and fine showy figures and faces of the Miss Traceys, between whose father and himself there had long been a rivalry of wealth, he was consoled for their elegance by reflecting how much more expensive and elegant Julia's dress would be, and how well she would look, flushed as he expected to see her, with the blush of emotion on entering a full room, and the consciousness of more than usual attraction in her appearance.

Julia at length appeared ; but pale, dejected, and in her old purple pelisse !

What a mortification ! His daughter, the great heiress, the worst dressed and most dowdy looking girl in the company ! Insupportable ! scarcely could he welcome her, though he had not seen her for some days ; and he seized the first opportunity of asking her if she had received the notes.

"Yes, I thank ye, sir ;" replied Julia.

"Then why did you not buy what I bade you ? It could not be gone ; for, if you did not buy it, nobody else could, I am sure."

"I—I—I thought I could do without it—and—"

"There now, there is perverseness. When I wished you not to have it, then you wanted it ; and now I protest if I don't believe you did it on purpose to mortify me ; and there 's those proud minxes, whose father is not worth half what I am, are dressed out as fine as princesses. I vow, girl, you look so shabby and ugly, I can't bear to look at you !"

What a trial for Julia ! her eyes filled with tears ; and at this moment Sir Frederic Mortimer approached her, and hoped she had not been ill ; but he thought she was paler than usual.—

"Paler !" cried her father ; "why, I should not have known her, she has made such a fright of herself."

"You may say so, sir," replied the baronet politely, though he almost agreed with him ; "but no other man can be of that opinion."

Julia was rather gratified by this speech ; but without

waiting for an answer, Sir Frederic had gone to join the Miss Traceys; and as he entered into an animated conversation with them, Julia was allowed, unattended, to walk to a window in the next room, and enjoy her own melancholy reflections.

At length, to Julia's great relief, they were summoned to the race ground; the baronet taking Miss Hanmer under one arm, and the elder Miss Tracey under the other. "So," cried Beresford, seizing Julia roughly by the hand, "I must lead you, I see; for who will take any notice of such a dowdy? Well girl, I was too proud of you, and you have contrived to humble me enough."

There was a mixture of tenderness and resentment in this speech, which quite overcame Julia, and she burst into tears. "There, now she is going to make herself worse by spoiling her eyes. But come, tell me what you did with the money; I insist upon knowing."

"I—I—gave it away," sobbed out Julia.

"Gave it away? Monstrous! I protest I will not speak to you again for a month." So saying, he left her, and carefully avoided to look at or speak to her again.

The races began, and were interesting to all but Julia, who, conscious of being beheld by her father with looks of mortification and resentment, and by the man of her choice with indifference, had no satisfaction to enable her to support the unpleasantness of her situation, except the consciousness that her sorrow had been the cause of happiness to others, and that the family whom she had relieved were probably at that moment naming her with praises and blessings. "Then why should I be so selfish as to repine?" thought Julia; "perhaps no one present has such a right as I to rejoice; for how poor are the gratifications of vanity to the triumphs of benevolence!"

So like a philosopher reasoned our heroine; but she felt like a woman, and, spite of herself, an expression of vexation still prevailed over the usual sweetness of her countenance.

The races at length finished, and with them she flattered herself would finish her mortification ; but in vain. The company was expected to stay to partake of a cold collation, which was to be preceded by music and dancing ; and Julia was obliged to accept the unwelcome invitation.

As the ladies were most of them very young, they were supposed not to have yet forgotten the art of dancing minuets, an art now of so little use ; and Mr Hanmer begged Sir Frederic would lead out his daughter to show off in a minuet. The baronet obeyed ; and then offered to take out Julia for the same purpose ; but she, blushing, refused to comply.

" Well, what 's that for ?" cried Beresford angrily, who knew that Julia was remarkable for dancing a good minuet. " Why can't you dance when you are asked, Miss Beresford ?" " Because," replied Julia in a faltering voice, " I have no gown on, and I can't dance a minuet in my—in my pelisse."

" Rot your pelisse !" exclaimed Beresford, forgetting all decency and decorum, and turned to the window to hide his angry emotions ; while Julia hung her head, abashed, and the baronet led out Miss Tracey, who, throwing off the cloak which she had worn before, having expected such an exhibition would take place, displayed a very fine form, set off by the most becoming gown possible.

" Charming ! admirable ! what a figure ! what grace !" was murmured throughout the room. Mr Beresford's proud heart throbbed almost to agony ; while Julia, though ever ready to acknowledge the excellence of another, still felt the whole scene so vexatious to her, principally from the mortification of her father, that her only resource was again thinking on the family rescued from misery by her.

Reels were next called for, and Julia then stood up to dance ; but she had not danced five minutes, when, exhausted by the various emotions which she had undergone during the eight and forty hours, her head became so

giddy, that she could not proceed, and was obliged to sit down.

"I believe the deuce is in the girl," muttered Mr Beresford; and, to increase her distress, Julia overheard him.

"In a short time the dancing was discontinued, and a concert begun. Miss Hanmer played a sonata, and Miss Tracey sung a bravura song with great execution. Julia was then called upon to play; but she timidly answered that she never played lessons;—

"But you sing," said Miss Hanmer.

"Sometimes; but I beg to be excused singing now."

"What! you will not sing neither?" said Mr Beresford.

"I can't sing now, indeed, sir; I am not well enough; and I tremble so much that I have not a steady note in my voice."

"So, miss," whispered Mr Beresford, "and this is what I get in return for having squandered so much money on your education!"

The Miss Traceys were then applied to, and they sung, with great applause, a difficult Italian duo, and were complimented into the bargain on their readiness to oblige.

Poor Julia!

"You see, Miss Beresford, how silly and contemptible you look," whispered Beresford, "while those squalling misses run away with all the admiration."

Julia's persecutions were not yet over. "Though you are not well enough, Miss Beresford, to sing a song," said Mr Hanmer, "which requires much exertion, surely you can sing a ballad without music, which is, I am told, your forte."

"So I have heard," cried Sir Frederic. "Do, Miss Beresford, oblige us."

"Do," said the Miss Traceys; "and we have a claim on you."

"I own it," replied Julia, in a voice scarcely audible; "but you, who are such proficient in music, must know,

that, to sing a simple ballad, requires more self-possession and steadiness of tone than any other kind of singing; as all the merit depends on the clearness of utterance, and the power of sustaining the notes."

"True; but do try."

"Indeed I cannot;" and, shrugging up their shoulders, the ladies desisted from further importunities. "I am so surprised," said one of them to the other, leaning across two or three gentlemen; "I heard that Miss Beresford was remarkably good humored and obliging, and she seems quite sullen and obstinate; don't you think so?"

"O dear, yes! and not obliging at all."

"No, indeed," cried Miss Hanmer; "she seems to presume on her wealth, I think; what think you, gentlemen?"

But the gentlemen were not so hasty in their judgments; two of them only observed that Miss Beresford was in no respect like herself that day.

"I don't think she is well," said the baronet.

"Perhaps she is in love," said Miss Tracey, laughing at the shrewdness of her own observation.

"Perhaps so," replied Sir Frederic, thoughtfully.

It was Sir Frederic's intention to marry, and, if possible, a young woman born in the same county as himself; for he wished her to have the same local prejudices as he had, and to have the same early attachments; consequently, he inquired of his steward, before he came to reside at his seat, into the character of the ladies in the neighborhood; but the steward could, or would, talk of no one but Julia Beresford; and of her he gave so exalted a character, that Sir Frederic, who only remembered her as a pleasing, modest girl, was very sorry that he had not paid her more attention.

Soon after, in the gallery of an eminent painter, he saw her picture; and though he thought it flattered, he gazed on it with pleasure, and fancied that Julia, when animated, might be quite as handsome as that was. Since that time he had frequently thought of her, and thought of her as a woman formed to make him happy; and

indeed he had gone to look at her picture the day before he came down to the country, and had it strongly in his remembrance when he saw Julia herself, pale, spiritless, and ill-dressed, in Mr Hanmer's drawing-room.

Perhaps it would be too much to say, that he felt as much chagrined as Mr Beresford; but certain it is, that he was sensibly disappointed, and could not help yielding to the superior attraction of the lovely and elegant Miss Tracey; besides, she was the object of general attention, and

‘ We know of old, that all contend
To win her grace whom all commend.’

The concert being over, the company adjourned to an elegant entertainment set out in an open pavilion in the park, which commanded a most lovely view of the adjacent country.

Julia seated herself near the entrance; the baronet placed himself between the two lovely sisters; and Beresford, in order to be able to vent his spleen every now and then in his daughter's ear, took a chair beside her.

The collation had every delicacy to tempt the palate, and every decoration to gratify the taste; and all, except the pensive Julia, seemed to enjoy it;—when, as she was leaning from the door to speak to a lady at the head of the table, a little boy, about ten years old, peeped into the pavilion, as if anxiously looking for some one.

The child was so clean, and so neat in his dress, that a gentleman near him patted his curly head, and asked him what he wanted.

“ A lady.”

“ But what lady? Here is one, and a pretty one too,” showing the lady next him; “ will not she do?”

“ Oh no! she is not my lady,” replied the boy.

At this moment Julia turned round; and the little boy, clapping his hands, exclaimed, “ Oh! that's she! that's she!” Then running out, he cried, “ Mother! mother! father! father! here she is! we have found her at last!” and before Julia, who suspected what was to follow, could leave her place, and get out of the pavilion, the poor

man and woman whom she had relieved, and their now well clothed, happy looking family, appeared before the door of it.

"What does all this mean?" cried Mr Hanmer.
"Good people, whom do you want?"

"We come, sir," cried the man, "in search of that young lady," pointing to Julia; "as we could not go from the neighborhood without coming to thank and bless her; for she saved me from going for a soldier, and my wife and children from a workhouse, sir, and made me and mine as comfortable as you now see us."

"Dear father! let me pass, pray do," cried Julia, trembling with emotion, and oppressed with ingenuous modesty.

"Stay where you are, girl," cried Beresford, in a voice between laughing and crying.

"Well, but how came you hither?" cried Mr Hanmer, who began to think this was a premeditated scheme of Julia's to show off before the company.

"Why, sir—shall I tell the whole story?" asked the man.

"No, no; pray go away," cried Julia, "and I'll come and speak to you."

"By no means," cried the baronet eagerly; "the story, the story, if you please."

The man then began, and related Julia's meeting him and his family, her having relieved them, and then running away to avoid their thanks, and to prevent her being followed, as it seemed, and being known—that, resolved not to rest till they had learnt the name of their benefactress, they had described her person and her dress; "but bless your honor," interrupted the woman, "when we said what she had done for us, we had not to ask any more, for every one said it could be nobody but Miss Julia Beresford!"

Here Julia hid her face on her father's shoulder, and the company said not a word. The young ladies appeared conscience struck; for it seemed that none in the neighborhood (and they were of it,) could do a kind action but Miss Julia Beresford.

"Well, my good man, go on," cried Beresford, gently.

"Well, sir, yesterday I heard that if I went to live at a market town four miles off, I could get more work to do than I have in my own village, and employ for my little boy too; so we resolved to go and try our luck there; but we could not be easy to go away, without coming to thank and bless that good young lady; so, hearing at her house that she was come hither, we made bold to follow her; your servants told us where to find her. Ah! bless her!—thanks to her, I can afford to hire a cart for my poor sick wife and family!"

"Ah! miss, miss," cried the little boy, pulling Julia by the arm, "only think, we shall ride in a cart, with a tall horse; and brother and I have got new shoes—only look!"

But miss was crying, and did not like to look; however, she made an effort, and looked up, but was forced to turn away her head again, overset by a "God bless you!" heartily pronounced by the poor woman, and echoed by the man.

"This is quite a scene, I protest," cried Miss Tracey.

"But one in which we should all have been proud to have been actors, I trust," answered the baronet. "What say you, gentlemen and ladies?" continued he, coming forward; "though we cannot equal Miss Beresford's kindness, since she sought out poverty, and it comes to us, what say you? shall we make a purse for these good people, that they may not think there is only one kind being in the neighborhood?"

"Agreed!" cried every one; and as Sir Frederic held the hat, the subscription from the ladies was a very liberal one; but Mr Beresford gave *five guineas*; then Mr Hanmer desired the overjoyed family to go to his house to get some refreshment, and the company resealed themselves.

But Mr Beresford having quitted his seat, in order to wipe his eyes unseen at the door, the baronet had taken the vacant place by Julia.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," cried Beresford, blowing his nose, "you shall see a new sight—a parent asking pardon of his child. Julia, my dear, I know I behaved very ill—I know I was very cross to you—very savage; I know I was. You are a good girl—and always were, and ever will be the pride of my life—so let's kiss and be friends;" and Julia, throwing herself into her father's arms, declared she should now be herself again.

"What! more scenes!" cried Mr Hanmer.—"What, are you sentimental too, Beresford? Who should have thought it!"

"Why, I'll tell a story now," replied he;—"that girl vexed and mortified me confoundedly, that she did. I wished her to be smart, to do honor to you and your daughter to day; so I sent her twelve guineas to buy a very handsome velvet pelisse, which she took a fancy to, but which I thought too dear. But instead of that, here she comes in this old fright, and a fine dowdy figure she looks—and when I reproached her, she said she had given the money away; and so I suppose it was that very money which she gave to these poor people. Heh! was it not so, Julia?"

"It was," replied Julia; "and I dared not then be so extravagant as to get the pelisse too."

"So, Hanmer," continued Beresford, "you may sneer at me for being *sentimental*, if you please; but I am now prouder of my girl in her shabby cloak here, than if she were dressed out in silks and satins."

"And so you ought to be," cried Sir Frederic. "And Miss Beresford has converted this garment," lifting up the end of the pelisse, "into a robe of honor;" so saying, he gallantly pressed it to his lips. "Come, I will give you a toast," continued he:—"Here is the health of the woman who was capable of sacrificing the gratification of her personal vanity to the claims of benevolence!"

The ladies put up their pretty lips, but drank the toast, and Beresford went to the door to wipe his eyes again; while Julia could not help owing to herself, that

if she had had her moments of mortification, they were richly paid.

The collation was now resumed, and Julia partook of it with pleasure ; her heart was at ease, her cheek recovered its bloom, and her eyes their lustre. Again the Miss Traceys sung, and with increased brilliancy of execution. "It was wonderful ! they sung like professors," every one said ; and then again was Julia requested to sing.

"I can sing *now*," replied she ; "and I never refuse when I *can* do so. Now I have found my father's favor, I shall find my voice too ;" and then, without any more preamble, she sung a plaintive and simple ballad, in a manner the most touching and unadorned.

No one applauded while she sung, for all seemed afraid to lose any particle of tones so sweet and so pathetic ; but when she had ended, every one, except Sir Frederic, loudly commended her, and he was silent ; but Julia saw that his eyes glistened, and she heard him sigh, and she was very glad that he said nothing.

Again the sisters sung, and Julia too, and then the party broke up ; but Mrs Tracey invited the same party to meet at her house in the evening, to a ball and supper, and they all agreed to wait on her.

As they returned to the house, Sir Frederic gave his arm to Julia, and Miss Tracey walked before them.

"That is a very fine, showy, elegant girl," observed Sir Frederic.

"She is indeed, and very handsome," replied Julia ; "and her singing is really wonderful."

"Just so," replied Sir Frederic ; "it is wonderful, but not pleasing. Her singing is like herself—she is a *bravura* song—showy and brilliant, but not *touching*—not interesting." Julia smiled at the illustration ; and the baronet continued ;—"will you be angry at my presumption, Miss Beresford, if I venture to add, that you too, resemble your singing ? if Miss Tracey be a *bravura* song, you are a ballad—not showy, not brilliant, but touching, interesting, and—"

"O! Pray say no more," cried Julia, blushing, and hastening to join the company—but it was a blush of pleasure; and as she rode home, she amused herself with analysing all the properties of the *ballad*, and she was very well contented with the analysis.

That evening, Julia, all herself again, and dressed with exquisite and becoming taste, danced, smiled, talked, and was universally admired. But was she *particularly* so? Did the man of her heart follow her with delighted attention?

"Julia," said her happy father, as they went home at night, "you will have the velvet pelisse, and Sir Frederic too, I expect."

Nor was he mistaken. The pelisse was hers the next day, and the baronet]some months after. But Julia, to this hour, preserves with the utmost care the faded pelisse, which Sir Frederic had pronounced to be "a robe of honor."

THE DEATH BED.

"Ah! ce n'est point légèrement qu'on a donné tant d'importance à la fidélité des femmes! Le bien, le mal de la société, sont attachés à leur conduite; le paradis ou l'enfer des familles dépend à tout jamais de l'opinion qu'elles ont donné d'elles."

LA MÈRE COUPABLE, p. 32.

BELMOUR, a gentleman residing in Dublin, was a man of small fortune, but of large expectations. He was heir to a distant and avaricious relation, who, not being able to bear the sight of the man who was to enjoy after his death that precious wealth which he had not the spirit to enjoy himself, forbade him his presence, and coldly allowed the noble minded representative of an ancient family to struggle with all the difficulties of a limited income.

These difficulties Belmour was imprudent enough to increase, by marrying a young woman who had no dower but her beauty. But, like Jaffier, "he was in love, and pleased with ruin;" or rather, his lovely wife made so many promises of being attentive to the strictest rules of economy, that Belmour thought ruin could not reach them, and believed that Mrs Belmour, as well as himself, had not a wish beyond the joys of home, and the little circle of enlightened friends to whom he was proud to introduce her. During the first year of their marriage, Mrs Belmour's wishes were, perhaps, as confined as his own; nor did she make any prudent resolutions but what it was her intention to keep. But vanity was her ruling passion; and, though curbed by love, it was by no means

subdued. Though she was so beautiful in face, so perfect in form that she needed not the usual ornaments of her sex, she had a most inordinate passion for dress, which, though for a time controlled, led her insensibly into expenses unwarranted by her own original situation in life, or her husband's confined circumstances; and debt succeeded to debt, embarrassment to embarrassment, till, just as the birth of a daughter had increased the expenses of their little household, when Belmour was endeavoring to curtail his own personal expenditure, in order to provide for the increasing wants of a family, demands, the consequences of his wife's extravagance, came unexpectedly upon him, and the new blown joys of the father were blighted by the angry sorrows of the husband.

But his resentment, though just, could not continue long against the tears and seeming penitence of his adored Henrietta; she made so many vows of amendment, and, while declaring that she felt herself unworthy of his love, she threw into her fine eyes so much touching tenderness, in order to excite it to the utmost, that Belmour pronounced her pardon in the most unequivocal manner; and, putting her child in her arms, contented himself with desiring her to remember that, by her conduct as a mother, she could amply make him amends for the errors which she had committed as a wife.

For some months all went on well again; but as soon as Mrs Belmour ceased to be a nurse, the wish of entering into company returned, and with it, the desire of various and expensive dress. Insensibly too, the circle of their acquaintance became enlarged; and the fame of Mrs Belmour's beauty being spread abroad, she became the fashionable subject of conversation in Dublin; and Mr Belmour was told it was a matter of surprise and regret at the Castle that his beautiful wife was not allowed to grace the circles there.

No man, not even the wisest man perhaps, ever had a beautiful wife, without taking pride in seeing universal homage paid to her charms; and when Mrs Bel-

mour eagerly entreated her husband to let her be presented, he yielded to the united suggestions of pride and tenderness, and Mrs Belmour was introduced into the court circle. The consequence was, that, in order to vie in dress with her new acquaintance, she again contracted debts, which, remembering the awfulness of her husband's resentment on her first transgressions in this manner, she studiously endeavored to keep from his knowledge.

At length, however, her chief creditor became clamorous, and his bill was delivered with a threat that he would not leave the house till he was paid, while a rich and profligate young man of fashion, who was Mrs Belmour's constant attendant, was paying his devoirs to her.

Mrs Belmour had not yet learned to conceal her feelings; and, overcome almost to fainting at the idea of her husband's being informed of a debt so enormous, Colonel Morrison soon drew from her a confession of the nature of her embarrassment; and, telling her that he would leave her for a few minutes, to give her an opportunity of recovering herself, he suddenly left the room.

In a few moments after, she heard the door of the hall closed; and Colonel Morrison, returning, begged her to forgive the liberty which he had taken, and then informed her that he had discharged the debt which distressed her, himself.

Confused, degraded, yet gratified and relieved, Mrs Belmour wept her thanks, but protested that she should insist on the Colonel's receiving back the sum which he had so kindly advanced, by instalments; and instantly she tendered him a small sum, which he, from policy, accepted; and by this measure, being somewhat reconciled to the means by which she had been assisted, Mrs Belmour resumed her gaiety, and Colonel Morrison flattered himself that the designs which he had formed against the honor of this deluded woman, were likely to succeed.

Soon after, he, by his own contrivance, found himself

again present when Mrs Belmour was beset by embarrassments of a similar nature ; and again was his assistance tendered and accepted.

The next step was to prevail on her to accept presents, which Belmour's narrow fortune forbade him to make ; though often did her affectionate husband lament his inability to gratify her taste, and assure her, that, as soon as he became possessed of the fortune in store for them, she should not have a wish ungratified, which money could indulge. But Colonel Morrison was already in possession of his fortune, and that fortune was at his command ; and, while he one day paid her debts, another day presented her with expensive ornaments, some of which she dared not wear except when she went out without her husband, as he did not know they were in her possession, her reputation became the victim of his attentions, and her virtue did not long survive it, especially as she learned to consider Belmour with aversion, as soon as she dreaded to behold in him a justly irritated judge.

But, guilty as Mrs Belmour was now become, she was not so lost to every honorable feeling as to bear to live under the roof of her injured husband, while carrying on a criminal intrigue with another man. On the contrary, she did not rest till Colonel Morrison had prepared every thing for an elopement ; and taking advantage of the very first opportunity that occurred, she fled to infamy and her seducer, and set off with him for the continent.

Mr Belmour was gone into the country for a few days ; and while there, the very day indeed of his wife's elopement, he received an express to let him know that his relation was dead, and that he was at length possessor of the long expected fortune.

"Now, then," cried Mr Belmour, hastening to town as fast as four horses could carry him, tears of tenderness filling his eyes as he spoke, "now, then, shall I see the wife of my heart gratified in all her wishes, and able to indulge the liberality of her nature ! Oh, Henrietta ! never again will your extravagance provoke a reproach from

my prudence, but we shall be uninterruptedly happy ; so happy !" here his voice failed him, and he sunk into the silence of full contentment.

"Where is your mistress ? is she at home ?" cried Mr Belmour, as the chaise stopped at his door—but without waiting for an answer he ran up into the drawing room ; whither his servant slowly followed him.

"She is not here," he exclaimed, and proceeded to her dressing room. "Is your mistress out ?" cried he, turning round to his servant, who held a letter in his hand.

"My—my mistress, sir," cried the servant, wiping his eyes, "went away—that is—went out yesterday, and left this letter for you."

Mr Belmour seized the letter, and, tearing it open with frantic eagerness, only read enough of it to inform him of his misery, before he fell senseless on the ground ; and it was some time before he recovered to wretchedness and recollection.

"But where is my child ? is she spared to me ?" cried the afflicted husband, starting from the supporting arms of his attendants ; and in a moment he was by the bedside of his forsaken Laura.

"Laura ! my poor forsaken babe !" cried Belmour, bursting into an agony of tears as he threw himself by the side of the sleeping child. At this moment she awoke ; and uneasy, as many children are on awaking from sleep, uttered a loud and impatient cry, which pierced her father to the soul.

"O God !" exclaimed he, striking his forehead, "poor babe ! thou hast no longer a mother to attend thy cries."

But her smiles distressed him as much ; and when, soothed by his caresses, the little girl put up her pretty mouth to kiss him, and, smiling through her tears, lisped out, "dear papa, and dear mamma !"

"Oh, Henrietta !" he cried, "how couldst thou have the heart to forsake her ?"

What a slave of criminal selfishness indeed must that

mother be, who, for a lover, can forsake her offspring ! Let not such a woman presume, in the pride of her heart, to look down with aversion on the poor desperate female who robs of existence the secret pledge of her frailty ; murderess though she be, she is not more unnatural than the cold hearted egotist, who can forsake her children for the arms of a seducer, and consent to brand her guiltless child with the dangerous distinction of being the daughter of an adulteress.

I will no longer dwell on the distress of Mr Belmour, nor on the alternate schemes of revenge, contempt, active resentment, and forbearance, which by turns agitated his mind ; suffice, that he resolved not to seek redress in a court of justice, and thereby enable himself or his guilty wife to marry again, as he wished not to be tempted to form a second connexion ; from a firm conviction, that it was his duty to devote himself entirely to the instruction of his deserted Laura, in order to supply to her the care of the parent whom she had lost ; and to imprint deeply on her mind those principles of religion and virtue, to the want of which he attributed the fall of her unhappy mother.

Mrs Belmour meanwhile, soon abandoned by the man for whom she had left her husband and her child, had no resource but in a continuance of a course of vice ; and when her daughter was on the eve of being introduced into the world, the too late repentant mother, a prey to remorse and sickness, was pining away life in a sort of premature decay ; while, as her weakness increased, the images of the husband and the child whom she had abandoned grew stronger and stronger, and she was tormented with the cravings of those feelings of returning affection, which she could never hope to have gratified.

Laura Belmour was then seventeen, and her anxious father was about to present her to the world, with solicitude struggling with parental pride ; and his hopes of her welfare were continually blasted by the suggestions of fear, and the whispers of experience.

Mr Belmour, though a virtuous man, was a man of the world, and but too well acquainted with the opinions and

sentiments of men of the world. Hence he feared that the guilt of her mother might injure his innocent and unoffending daughter, as she might be supposed likely to inherit her mother's vices; as if education were not every thing in the formation of character, and blood nothing!

Laura, educated by a parent who watched over her actions, her studies, and acquaintance, with unremitting attention, that her mind might not be sullied by any possible circumstance; ignorant too as Mr Belmour had wisely suffered her to remain of the guilt and existence of her unhappy mother, could not fail to be as pure as though her mother had been the pride of her sex; but Mr Belmour knew, that, in the eyes of many persons, she would be the victim of her parent's infamy; and so terrified was he lest this circumstance should prevent her from settling in life, that, though no friend to a young woman's marrying early, he was eager to promote the most distant prospect of disposing of Laura in marriage.

As Laura was young, beautiful, and highly accomplished, she was no sooner introduced than she was surrounded by admirers, one of whom soon recommended himself both to her and her father; when, what Mr Belmour's fears had prognosticated took place. The young gentleman's father, on hearing that his son appeared greatly charmed by the daughter of the frail Mrs Belmour, forbade him to form a connexion which his prudence could never approve; and the youth himself, being as prudent as his father, left Dublin, in order to avoid the danger of forming so improper an attachment.

Unfortunately Mr Belmour did not long remain ignorant of the cause of this cessation of an acquaintance which had filled his heart with hopes of happiness for his daughter. Every one has some kind friend, who, on pretence of expressing his or her sorrow for your misfortune, takes care to inform you of some disaster, which, but for their officiousness, you would never have known, and which consequently to you would never have existed; and this was the case with Mr Belmour. A *soi-disant* friend,

lamenting very pathetically the illiberality of mankind, humanely plunged a dagger in the heart of Belmour, by letting him know that the infamy of his wife had deprived his daughter of a most excellent husband.

The intelligence, for a time, made Dublin odious to him ; and he resolved to change the scene, and take Laura to the world of London, where a new and unlooked-for instance of the profligacy of a man of the world, and of the fatal consequences of his wife's frailty, soon presented itself.

From amongst the crowd who surrounded her, Laura's inexperienced heart soon singled out Sir Edward Tyrconnel, a young baronet, who to every grace of person added every charm of manner ; and who, by unremitting attention, convinced her that he entertained for her a passion at once ardent and respectful. Nor was Mr Belmour less charmed with Sir Edward than his daughter ; when, just as he had declared his love to Laura, a friend of Belmour's called on him, and informed him that he knew from indisputable authority, that Sir Edward had a wife alive, an elderly woman, whom he had married for her fortune, and who from the circumstance of her having been dying for years, had enabled her profligate husband to seduce more than one young woman, by a promise of marrying her as soon as his wife died.

To this information Belmour listened in a paroxysm of rage ; nor was it otherwise than strictly true. True also was it, that Sir Edward, who scrupled nothing in order to gratify his passions, whenever the object of his wishes was unprotected and friendless, would have shrunk back appalled from the hopeless task of seducing the beautiful heiress of the rich Mr Belmour, had not he built his hopes of success on the known frailty of her unhappy mother. Mr Belmour too suspected that he did so ; and driven to frenzy by the idea, he wrote a challenge to Sir Edward, accusing him of dishonorable designs towards Laura, and insisted on immediate satisfaction.

Piqued and disappointed, for Sir Edward thought his being married was unknown in England, he accepted the challenge, but refused to fire first. Mr Belmour fired, and missed him; Sir Edward then discharged his pistol in the air, declaring that he would not lift his arm against the father of the woman whom he adored; and protesting that his only wish was, as the death his wife was expected every day, to gain an interest in Laura's heart sufficient to make other suitors unsuccessful, till he was at liberty to offer her his hand and fortune.

Mr Belmour accepted this apology, but insisted that he should break off all intercourse with Laura till he was at liberty to address her; and then, as friends, they parted.

But Sir Edward had a *powerful* advocate in Laura's heart; she saw no dishonor to himself, no danger to her, in his conduct; and though she refused to meet him, or hear from him clandestinely, a mutual friend conveyed messages backwards and forwards from the lovers; and Laura, looking forward with certainty to being the wife of Sir Edward, treasured up her affection to him in her bosom, as an inclination which a very short time would entirely sanction; and Mr Belmour had the mortification of seeing that Laura, though devoid of any criminal propensity, had yet incurred the sin of eagerly expecting the death of another—while he was equally aware that Sir Edward still in a manner continued his addresses; and being sure of the profligacy of the baronet, he could not believe that his intentions were really honorable.

One evening Belmour had accompanied Laura to Covent Garden theatre, and, preceded by their servant, was conducting her along the piazzas to the carriage, which was stationed in King street, when a woman of the town, whose meagre frame was ill concealed by the thin and dirty covering which she wore, and whose pale and haggard looks not even art could disguise, in feeble accents accosted Mr Belmour as he disengaged his arm from Laura, and stepped forward to see where the car-

riage stood, and asked charity of him, declaring that she had not tasted food all day ; and, as she said this, she laid her cold hand on his arm, to keep herself from falling.

Mr Belmour started, and threw off the trembling arm that leaned on him for support—for the voice had thrilled to his soul ; and turning round as he did so, he beheld in the tottering being by his side, his once beautiful and beloved Henrietta.

The recognition was mutual ; and, with a shriek of agony, the wretched victim of seduction sunk at his feet ; and in a tone broken, and almost extinct, exclaimed—
“ Mercy ! pardon ! and I shall die in peace.”

The appeal was not lost on Mr Belmour ; and he had raised the wretched being in his arms, when he beheld Laura gazing on them and full of speechless wonder. At that moment he perceived a gentleman whom he knew ; and begging that he would, for God’s sake, see his daughter safe to her carriage, he procured admission into a private room at a coffee house under the piazzas ; and thither, assisted by his servant, who had also recognised his former mistress, he conveyed the senseless Henrietta.

Alas ! while performing the offices of christian duty to his guilty wife, little did Mr Belmour think that he had exposed to the utmost danger, his as yet innocent child. The gentleman to whose care he had consigned her, in order to spare her the dreadful scene which awaited him, was the friend and confidant of Sir Edward ; who, as soon as Mr Belmour was out of sight, accosted the trembling and amazed Laura, and helped to support her along the piazzas ; and then, on pretence of procuring her something to compose her spirits, prevailed on her to enter a back room in an adjoining fruit shop, while Laura, too happy to find herself again with the man of her heart, forgot every thing in the kind and soothing attentions of Sir Edward ; and his friend having left them alone, she had been prevailed on to listen, without indignation, to his proposal, that she should elope with

him, and live under the protection of a female relation of his, where he might see her every day till his wife's death, which was hourly expected, should take place.

But while Laura is madly listening to the voice of the seducer, let us return to her unhappy parents.

Belmour had laid his wretched charge on a bed ; and while others were administering to her revival, he was gazing with tearless eyes and in unutterable woe on the dreadful object before him ; and enumerating to himself, with a sort of desperate curiosity, the various traces which disease and want had left in her once exquisite form.

At length she revived, and, recognising her husband, gave a deep groan, and hid her face with her hands.

"For God's sake, leave us together !" cried Belmour, hoarse with emotion. He was obeyed ; and Henrietta found herself alone with the husband she had so cruelly abandoned.

"Oh, mercy ! pardon !" she again exclaimed, and tried to sink upon her knees ; but Belmour prevented her ; and seating her on the bed, he sat beside her, and gazed on her with compassionate and mournful earnestness, while her eyes sunk abashed from his gaze.

"Oh, Henrietta !" cried he at length, bursting into tears—"where are your lovers now ? Who will now clasp this faded form to their bosom ? But I, the husband whom you forsook, would have loved you even in sickness, and clasped you as fondly to me, as in the days of your brightest bloom. Nay, even now, had ought *else* changed you thus, I would have watched over you, and pressed you to my heart so tenderly ! O cruel, cruel woman ! O thou, whom neither absence, injuries, nor vice, have been able to tear from my heart—say—"

Here he paused, for Henrietta had fallen back on the bed, and he thought that she was gone for ever ; and, in a transport of penitence for his reproaches, he threw himself on his knees by her, and conjured her to recover, and hear him pronounce her pardon, promising, at the

same time, that he would reproach her no more. He did yet further ; he laid her head on his bosom.

She revived ; she saw where her head rested, and a faint smile illumined her countenance ; but in a moment horror supplied the place of satisfaction, and, shuddering, she withdrew herself from the support of which she knew herself unworthy. Nor did Belmour offer to detain her ; with his fear for her life his tenderness had vanished ; but when Henrietta again implored his forgiveness, he forgot every thing but her wretchedness and her situation, and promised, what she dared not ask, that she should breathe her last in his arms. As he said this, her hand grasped his, and he returned the almost convulsive pressure.

At this moment Henrietta took courage to ask whether she had a *daughter*. With scarcely audible voice he replied, " Yes, an angel, and lovely as—as her mother—"

" Thank God !" she exclaimed. " And, oh ! may she prove a blessing to you, and make you amends by her virtues for my guilt ! But where is she ?"

" Ha ! well remembered," cried Belmour, ringing the bell hastily, and the servant appeared.

" Go instantly," cried he, " and see whether Miss Belmour is got safe home."

" I will, sir," replied the man ; " but I doubt—"

" Doubt what ?"

" Why sir, you know, on seeing that lady, you begged Mr Dalton to see her safe to her carriage."

" Well, and what then ?"

" Why, sir, you forget, surely, that Mr Dalton is Sir Edward Tyrconnel's friend ; and you did not see, probably, that Sir Edward was behind, as if watching to speak to my young lady."

In a moment the danger to which his child was exposed rushed on the mind of the unhappy father ; and the wretched Henrietta appeared to him as doomed to be, in every way, the enemy of her devoted daughter ; till, driven to frenzy by this new calamity, he turned round to her, and exclaimed—" Wretch ! this also is *thy*

deed ! Yes, thou hast been the means of plunging thy forsaken child in infamy like thy own !”

Here, uttering a dreadful scream, the wretched woman exclaimed—“O do not curse me ! the agonies of death are on me.” But she spoke in vain. Belmour heard her not ; he heeded not even his dying Henrietta, but rushed to the door, determined to go in pursuit of his daughter.

We left Laura listening with fond credulity to the proposals of her lover, and willing to believe that even her father would not greatly resent her acceding to a plan which, in her eyes, had not even the resemblance of culpability ; and she had almost consented to put herself in the power of a man, who, though she knew it not, meant nothing but her ruin, and deemed her an easy victim ; not but that she frequently interrupted Sir Edward with exclamations of wonder, who that poor, wretched woman could be, who so much interested her father ; and Sir Edward had as constantly attributed Belmour’s conduct to humanity, made more active by some previous knowledge of its object ; and then resuming his tender entreaties and attentions, he succeeded in putting an end to inquiries which he did not choose to answer, though well aware who was the object of Mr Belmour’s attentions.

A chaise, procured by Sir Edward’s friend, was ready ; and Laura was only faintly resisting the entreaties of her lover to allow him to lead her to it, when the door of the room in which they were was suddenly opened, and a young man, in the habit of a clergyman, rushed into the room.

This gentleman, whose name was Lionel Dormer, though not authorized by his rank or fortune to address the daughter of Mr Belmour, had vainly endeavored to behold Laura without emotion ; but, as he was without hope or presumption, he contented himself with gazing on her unobserved, as he thought, at a distance ; though he might have seen, by the conscious blush which overspread Laura’s cheek whenever he entered the room where she was, that she had observed the earnestness of

his gaze, and attributed it to a cause flattering to her vanity, if not to her feelings.

Dormer had been the unobserved spectator of Mr Belmour's rencontre with his unhappy wife, whose person was known to him ; and was just stepping forward to offer his services to take Miss Belmour away from a scene so dreadful to her feelings, should she surmise the truth, when he saw her father consign her to the care of Sir Edward Tyrconnel's friend ; and saw that gentleman, whose character and whose pretensions to Laura were well known to him, come forward, and prevail on his destined victim to enter the shop nearest to them.

His first impulse was to follow Mr Belmour ; but he had lost sight of him ; besides, he had only suspicions of his daughter's danger to impart to him ; and he could not bear to call Mr Belmour away from the pious, though dreadful task, of speaking peace and forgiveness to the soul of a trembling culprit, perhaps on the verge of eternity. He therefore resolved to watch the lovers himself, and to regulate his actions according to theirs. He did so ; and as if virtuous love had resolved, for once, to triumph over illicit passion, a scheme occurred to him to save Laura from dishonor, just as by agreeing to her lover's plan she had unconsciously exposed herself to it.

"No, indeed, I cannot leave my father ; I cannot be so disobedient ; for pity's sake let me go home this moment," cried Laura, faintly trying to disengage herself from Sir Edward's encircling arm.

At this moment Dormer entered the room, and begged Miss Belmour would allow him to conduct her to her father.

"'Sdeath, sir ! who are you ?" cried Sir Edward. "Do you know him, Miss Belmour ?"

"I only know," replied Laura, "the gentleman's name and person ; but my father has sent him, and—"

"Your father send a stranger for you ! No, this is some fortune-hunter, who wants to get you in his power ; but I will frustrate his design ; therefore, give me your hand." But Laura shrunk back.

"Sir Edward," replied Dormer, "one of us has designs against this lady, I know; but—"

"Insolent villain!" replied the baronet. "Away with you this moment, or—"

"Sir," replied the dignified young man, "when I know that I am engaged in a *good* cause, in the rescue of innocence, I am not capable of being awed by the threats of any one." Here he paused, from violent emotion; for Laura, terrified and abashed, had thrown herself for support on the shoulder of her lover; who, thinking his victory was now certain, haughtily demanded whether Dormer dared to assert that Mr Belmour had sent him for his daughter.

"No; he did not send me," was the answer.

"There, you see!" exclaimed the baronet triumphantly; and Laura coldly told Dormer she had no occasion for his services.

"Poor, unconscious victim!" cried Dormer, elevating his voice; "I vow that I will not leave you till I see you under your father's protection; nay, I will do yet more to preserve you; for I will lead you to him, where he is now kneeling in silent horror by the bed of your dying and guilty mother."

"Mother! did you say?" said Laura, screaming with agony, and springing forward towards him as she spoke.

"Barbarian!" cried Sir Edward, turning pale, and trying to hide his confusion under humanity; "how can you have the brutality to tell her this horrid truth!"

"Do *you* talk of humanity," replied Dormer, "whose aim is to plunge her innocence in infamy like her mother's?"

"Sir, sir," again cried Laura, hanging on his arm—"for God's sake, for mercy's sake, what did you say of my mother? Have I a mother, sir?"

"Miss Belmour," solemnly replied Dormer, "that poor, wretched creature, whom you saw supported in the arms of your agitated father, was your mother; once lovely and innocent as you, till she listened to the voice of the seducer. Oh, Miss Belmour! will *you* too listen

to it? will you too commit adultery, and receive the addresses of a married man?"

"Never! never!" cried the agitated girl. "Oh, sir, lead me this moment to my father, and he will bless you for—." She could say no more; but throwing herself into Dormer's arms, she fainted on his bosom; and in that state, spite of the resistance of Sir Edward, who fiercely threatened revenge, he bore her to the door; and having soon learnt whither the gentleman had conveyed the dying woman, in a few moments Laura was under the same roof with her father; and Dormer, as soon as she revived, hastened in search of Mr Belmour.

He reached the apartment just as Belmour, muttering curses on his wife, was hastening in pursuit of his child.

"Do you bring news of my daughter?" cried Belmour wildly.

"I do; she is safe, and in the next room," answered Dormer.

Belmour turned from him, and burst into a flood of tears.

"What is that? What did you tell him?" cried Henrietta. "O do not say his child is dishonored, lest he should again curse me! O wretched woman! must I then die with the consciousness that I have caused the guilt of my child?"

"No," cried Dormer, eagerly approaching her, "heaven spares you that torment. I come to speak peace and comfort to you. Your daughter is under this roof, in all her native innocence." Henrietta at these words pressed his hand to her clammy lips. "Nay," and his voice faltered as he spoke, "*you* have been the means, perhaps, of saving your daughter from perdition."

Henrietta gasping for breath fixed her eyes wildly on him, and Belmour eagerly approached him.

"Yes, she would probably have been forced to follow her abandoned lover; when on being informed that the unhappy object whom she had seen her father supporting was her mother, once lovely and innocent as herself,

struck by the warning example, she threw herself into my arms, and allowed me to conduct her hither."

"My God! my gracious God! I thank thee!" cried Henrietta; "I have then saved, and not destroyed my child; and thou, Belmour, wilt now bless, not curse me!"

Belmour could not speak, but he pressed the poor penitent in his arms.

"Good young man! see what you have done! He has embraced me! I owe this blessing to you," cried Henrietta with effort; then laying her cheek on the bosom of Belmour, her lips moved as if in prayer; and she expired without a groan.

After a pause of some minutes, Belmour said, "Laura must be brought into this apartment; alas! she needs the warning of a scene like this."

"Oh no! for pity's sake, spare her the trial!" exclaimed Dormer, no longer able to bear to wound Laura's feelings, when the purpose for which he wounded her was fully answered.

But the offended and deeply irritated father felt differently; and entering the room where Laura was, he took her trembling hand in silence, and led her up to the corpse of her mother.

"This was your mother, Laura," said Mr Belmour, "once the pride, then the bane of my life! Tremble, deluded girl, lest thou be like her, and lest the curses of thy father succeed to his blessings! Oh, Laura! but for that benevolent stranger, what, what perhaps, wouldst thou have been tomorrow!"

The lesson, a dreadful one indeed, sunk deep into her heart; and, kneeling by her mother's corpse, she solemnly vowed to endeavor to look on her abandoned lover from that moment with nothing but contempt and aversion; and hard as the struggle was, she was at length successful in her efforts.

But did Dormer's virtues, and humble, hopeless passion obtain no recompense? Yes—Mr Belmour, too rich to require fortune in a son in law, finding that Dormer

possessed such virtues and such talents as made him an ornament to his sacred profession, bestowed on him, as a wife, with her entire consent and approbation, the woman whom he had rescued from danger, if not from guilt; and Laura, never forgetting the warning example of her mother, was at once the pride of her father, and the happiness of her husband.

THE FASHIONABLE WIFE, AND UNFASHIONABLE HUSBAND.

LOUISA HOWARD was the only child of Lord N—— ; and neither trouble, expense, nor the most watchful attention had been spared, to make her as richly gifted in virtues and accomplishments, as she already was in wealth and personal charms.

But the vigilant eye of a mother had not watched over her youth ; and where is the eye that can equal a mother's in vigilance ? Lady N—— died when her child was only seven years old ; and though Lord N—— fulfilled, with the most scrupulous exactness, the directions left by his amiable wife for the education of Louisa, it was not in his nature or power, nor is it, perhaps, possible for any man, to take cognizance of those apparently slight, but really important deviations from the strict path of propriety and rectitude, which the observation of a mother easily detects, and can frequently prevent.

For instance, tendencies to wastefulness ; to unnecessary expense ; to want of order ; to want of punctuality in the payment of old debts, and to imprudent haste in contracting new ones ; these, and many other faults of the same kind, being most visible in the interior of a young woman's domestic establishment, are likely to escape a father's notice in their progress, and to remain unknown, till they burst upon him matured into lasting and pernicious habits.

This was the case with Louisa Howard. Accustomed to every indulgence which opulence could bestow,

and believing that she was born to have every wish gratified as soon as formed, no considerations of economy could withhold her from indulging every benevolent or selfish wish of her heart; nay, an artful and dependent female relation who lived in the family, and to whom her extravagance was serviceable, was continually assuring her, that economy in her would be a *vice*;—hence, she contracted habits of spending money in such profusion, both on her own wants and those of others, that she found herself, at the early age of eighteen, involved in debt to an amount so considerable, that, lavish as her father was in supplying her wants, and indulgent to her errors, she shrunk back affrighted from the task of disclosing her situation to him, and was reduced to the degrading necessity of putting off with fair promises the creditors who waited on her for something more substantial; while, though the mischievous relation who had helped to mislead her, was at this time removed from her by death, the habit, alas! was not removed with the promoter of it; and though convinced of the error of her ways, to forsake them, and tread again in the right path, was a task infinitely beyond her ability and resolution to execute.

Thus, though possessed of superior beauty, talents, and accomplishments, and of a sweetness of temper which had never known a moment's cloud, Louisa knew that she had frailties which contained the germs of incalculable mischief; and while she felt herself in many respects culpable as a daughter, she also knew that she was still more unfitted to act with propriety the part of a wife. Yet, to be a wife, and the wife of one of the most respectable of men, soon became the dear and secret object of her ambition.

Louisa was in the habit of reading the debates in the newspapers to Lord N——; and at a time when the state of politics was such, as to involve in its consequences even the existence, perhaps, of civilized society; and to cause every woman, as well as man, of sensibility and strong affections, to sorrow with gloomy anticipa-

tion over those sufferings in a neighboring kingdom, which might one day or other be but too prevalent in our own; at this period of alarm and interest, Lord Henry Algernon distinguished himself in the lower house by all the graces of eloquence, and the force of argument; and Louisa, who, like most young men and women of quick talents, was a great enthusiast, and fond of having an idol to worship, fancied that this modern patriot and orator realized her ideas of those who lived in the pages of history; and unconsciously to herself, her reason and her imagination united to prepare her young heart to imbibe a passion for a man whom she had never seen, and who, from his age and character, was not likely to be desirous of obtaining the heart which she was ready to bestow.

Nor was it long before she began to suspect that Lord Henry engrossed more of her thoughts than delicacy and prudence warranted; and of this she was convinced when she saw him by accident during a short stay in London. "There! that's Lord Henry Algernon," said a lady to her, whom she was accompanying one morning to her milliner's.

Louisa eagerly followed the direction of her friend's eyes, and saw those of Lord Henry fixed upon her with a look of complacency as he passed; she blushed, and withdrew hers immediately; but she turned and looked at him through the little back window of the coach, till he was out of sight.

"So—that is Lord Henry Algernon!" said Louisa, sighing when she saw him no longer.

"Yes," replied her friend; "he is very plain; is he not?"

"Plain! with those eyes!" returned Louisa eagerly; "impossible!" and, leaning back in the carriage, she fell into no unpleasing reverie.

Certain it is, that Lord Henry's speeches lost nothing of their merit in her opinion, from the view which she had had of his person; and she could not help owning to herself, that she thought too much of a man who was never likely to think of her at all; but perhaps she

never gave so great a proof of the strength of her judgment, as in thinking with such decided preference of a man like him.

Lord Henry Algernon was not such a man as girls of eighteen commonly admire or behold with pleasure. He was considerably more than thirty; fonder of books than of society; and his person was more remarkable for its manliness than its grace; nor could his features boast of much regularity; his complexion was pale, and his skin slightly injured by the small-pox; but the striking lustre and expression of his dark eyes, made ample amends for the irregularity of his other features; and, aided by a smile, which though rare was irresistible, gave him pretensions to as much reputation for personal beauty, as a wise man need wish to possess, or a rational woman desire in the man of her choice.

Such were his external pretensions to the admiration of our sex; and in eloquence, virtue, and talents he was so avowedly distinguished, that awe and reverence seemed likely in women to forbid the existence towards him of any softer feeling; perhaps, too, the reserve and almost cold dignity of his manner, might, by making him not likely to inspire love, occasion him to be less apt to feel it; but certain it is, that he had never known what a *serious* passion was, when he was first introduced to our conscious and blushing heroine at the Castle, as her father's seat was called.

Lord N—— was as much prejudiced in Lord Henry's favor as Louisa was; and it was the most earnest wish of his heart to see him the husband of his daughter.

"Louisa," said he to her one day, "I expect a visiter soon, to spend some days with me; and I desire you to put on all your airs and graces; for he is worth having for a husband, I assure you; and I should be the happiest of fathers, were I to see you married to him."

"Indeed, sir," replied Louisa, turning very pale, "I do not wish to be married; indeed, I do not think I shall ever marry at all;" and as she said this, her eyes filled with tears.

"Pho, pho!—nonsense! girlish whims!" cried Lord N——; "and I hope Lord Henry Algernon will put other notions into your head."

"Lord Henry Algernon, sir!" exclaimed Louisa, trembling and faltering: "Is he—has he—"

"Has he what?—made proposals? No, to be sure; why, he never saw you; and I hope you are not vain enough to suppose that he has fallen in love with you from the report of your beauty? No; love at first sight is silly enough; but love without sight would be an atrocious absurdity indeed."

Covered with blushes, and her head hanging on her bosom, Louisa faintly replied, "I—I have *seen* Lord Henry, sir."

"Well—and what's that to the purpose?—I was not accusing you of being in love with him from report, was I?"

Louisa did not answer; she saw that her consciousness had nearly betrayed her; but, recovering herself, she asked whether Lord Henry was really the guest whom her father expected at the castle.

"Yes—he is indeed; his father and I were old friends; and Algernon has owned that I have therefore some claim on the friendship of the son. He has desired that I would not invite company to meet him; so, girl, you will have him all to yourself; and, if you make the most of the opportunity, I dare say you may effect a conquest, which other women have vainly attempted."

"No, sir; no," replied Louisa; "I am wholly unworthy, indeed I am, to be the choice of such a man; and all I can hope is, that he will not look upon me with contempt."

"What! how! *contempt*! look upon you with contempt! a girl possessed of youth, beauty, understanding, and accomplishments; a lord's daughter too; and a rich heiress! Have more self-respect, I beg, Miss Howard," cried Lord N——.

"Alas! I have too much self-knowledge to have self-respect, sir," replied Louisa, bursting into tears, and re-

ting into her room, where various ideas engrossed her meditations; but the most delightful, and the one which she most loved to dwell upon, was the look which Lord Henry, unconscious who she was, had given her as he passed her.

Still she thought that Lord Henry was not a man to be captivated by mere outward charms; and though pleased to find that the man whom she admired was the choice of her father, she felt assured that she should be to him an object of indifference. She even learnt to think meanly of those talents on which she had before valued herself; and was alarmed lest Lord N——, who was naturally vain of her accomplishments, and proud of displaying them, should obtrude on Lord Henry, and exhibit for his admiration, what she now deemed incorrect drawings, and ill-colored paintings; and should force her to exhibit her musical abilities before a man used, probably, to hear, and exclusively to relish, the performances of the first musicians in the metropolis.

"Whither is my self-confidence flown?" said Louisa, deeply sighing, as she eagerly seized on some of her framed designs and paintings, and removed them out of sight. "However, I am resolved Lord Henry shall not see these."

Lord N—— entered the room as she was removing the last picture; and he stood aghast with astonishment. "May I beg leave to ask, Miss Howard, what you are doing?" cried Lord N——.

"I am moving these wretched drawings and paintings away, before Lord Henry comes."

"And pray who told you they were wretched drawings and paintings? And why should not Lord Henry see them?"

"Because I am sure he must think them wretched performances; and that I am very vain in sticking them up round the room, as if I thought they were perfection."

"And pray Miss Howard, who told you Lord Henry was a judge of such things? I dare say I know much more of the matter than he does (for because a man can

talk for hours in the house, I do not see that it follows that he must know every thing;) and I tell you the drawings and paintings are good, very good; and to please *my vanity*, if not yours, I desire you to bring them back, and place them where they were before."

Louisa, with tears in her eyes, obeyed; but she could not help, though without hope of success, petitioning Lord N—— not to ask her to sing or play to Lord Henry.

Lord N—— was about to answer her rather indignantly, when, on observing her downcast eye, her cheek covered with blushes, and an unusual degree of awkwardness in her manner, a suspicion of the state of her heart rushed into his mind; and, chuckling with a sort of inward laugh, he only said, "Pho, pho, nonsense! silly girl!" and left the room, assured that Louisa would be Lady Henry Algernon; as she would throw no obstacles in the way of the marriage, and his parental pride made him think it impossible that Lord Henry should not fall in love with Louisa.

At length Lord Henry arrived; and Louisa was presented to him by her father, full of apprehensions lest his lordship should have observed her confusion, and attributed it to a cause flattering to his vanity.

But she need not have been alarmed; Lord Henry was no coxcomb; he was not like many men, who, though without one attractive quality of mind or person, are apt to conceive themselves objects of irresistible attraction to our sex; he saw in the blush of a lovely girl, at his approach, a sign of nothing but youthful timidity; and though conscious that his alliance had been courted by more than one woman, he attributed the preference shown him to his very large possessions.

But this fear was not the only feeling which distressed Louisa. She saw evidently, by the manner in which Lord Henry looked at her, that he did not remember that he had ever seen her before; she was conscious that he did not say to himself, as she hoped he might have said, "That is the young lady I saw in Lady W.'s carriage!"

However, she ceased to think of herself, her fears, and her disappointments, when Lord Henry began to converse ; when she heard uttered, in a deep, impressive tone, those arguments and those truths, which had excited in her young, but awakened mind, a degree of enthusiasm equal to what she felt on reading the lives of her favorite heroes. She listened, and she loved ; and she was not sorry that Lord Henry in the warmth of argument, forgot that she was present, because it enabled her to watch incessantly the fine expression of his countenance, unperceived by him, and without any imputation on her modesty.

After dinner, Louisa's expected trial began. Lord N——, at length, impatient to show off his daughter, desired Lord Henry to observe the drawings and pictures round the room ; adding, " I assure you, Algernon, they are all Louisa's doing, without any assistance from a master."

Perhaps Lord Henry thought that was very evident, and Louisa feared that he did so ; however, he did not utter so mortifying a truth ; but, coldly looking at them, only said, " It must have taken you, madam, a great deal of time to complete these performances."

Louisa *curtsied* in answer ; her heart was full. Not a word in commendation ! True, she did not expect he should *like them* ; but others, and persons of distinguished taste too, had said they were fine. " Well," thought Louisa, " he will not admire me for my powers as an *artist*, that's clear ; and he looks at me as if he considered me a mere child."

Nor was she mistaken. Lord Henry had hitherto considered all girls of eighteen as mere children, and he thought that no woman under five-and-twenty could engage his attention ; and though he owned that Louisa was beautiful, he never imagined that he could feel affection for her, or inspire her with it.

Lord N——, as well as Louisa, felt that the exhibition of her powers of pencil had failed of effect ; those of her voice and finger remained to be tried ; and, in spite-

of her oft-expressed reluctance, she was forced to sit down to the instrument. She played first; the lesson was difficult and Louisa blundered through all the difficult passages.

She ended, and Lord Henry only observed that he thought her fingers must ache.

She sung; her voice, from emotion and fear, was hoarse and thick, and her utterance imperfect; and when, abashed and mortified, she rose from the instrument, Lord Henry thanked her for her readiness to oblige, even at great inconvenience to herself; for, he said, he had observed that she sung with great difficulty, and he feared she had a bad cold.

Louisa could hardly refrain from tears at this mortifying speech; but Lord Henry was wholly unconscious that he had said any thing severe; for the truth was he did not understand music; and he was too wise to pretend to give an opinion on subjects which he did not understand. But, though he could not tell whether Louisa sung well or ill, he could see that she sung with great effort, and that she was very hoarse; and he was sorry that she took such pains to please an auditor, on whom her painful exertions were wholly thrown away.

He therefore did not request her to sing another song; and Louisa felt convinced of the truth of the forebodings which led her to request Lord N—— not to insist on a display of her musical talents; while the disappointed father began to think that though Lord Henry was a man of letters, and a great orator, he had no general taste, and no universal knowledge.

After supper, the conversation turned on politics; and Lord Henry talked on a most interesting political question, on which he had made a celebrated speech, that had been afterwards printed, and very generally circulated.

"I remember, Algernon," said Lord N——, "that you said exactly what you are now saying, in your celebrated speech on that question. Did he not Louisa? I

dare say you can repeat the passage ; for I am sure you know it all by heart."

"Is it possible," cried Lord Henry, blushing with surprise and pleasure, "that Miss Howard should have done me so much honor?" while Louisa, in great confusion, cast her eyes down, and said not a word.

"Answer, Louisa," cried Lord N——. "Let Lord Henry hear that passage which you so much admired."

"Pray, pray, do not ask me, sir. Indeed I cannot do it."

"Well, if you will not repeat it, you might let him see your translation of it into French, as an exercise. I am sure you need not be ashamed of it."

But at that moment Louisa was ashamed of her father, herself, and every thing, and positively refused to comply ; and Lord Henry, feeling for her girlish bashfulness, as he considered it, told Lord N——, that though he should be proud and delighted to be indulged with a sight so flattering to his vanity, he begged Louisa might not be urged any further on the subject ; and he afterwards added, that he could not have supposed subjects of such a nature as that which it had been his lot to discuss in the debate in question, could have interested and engaged the attention of so young a lady.

"Oh, I assure you," answered Lord N——, "that Louisa finds something in all your speeches, Lord Henry, to interest and amuse her ; and she expects the newspaper now with more eagerness than she does any new novel ; for she likens you to some one of her favorite orators and patriots in Plutarch, and—of which of them is it, Louisa, that Lord Henry reminds you?"

Louisa immediately, like a sheepish girl, as Lord Henry thought, though in reality like a conscious and delicate woman, terrified lest her favorite should be led by her father's indiscreet communications to suspect his influence over her mind, suddenly left the room, and retired to her own chamber, to recover the shock which her delicacy had received.

It would have been some consolation to her, had she

known that Lord Henry felt her absence ; and that while Lord N—— pettishly remarked on the caprice and perverseness of girls, he said that such blushing timidity and reserve as Miss Howard's he had rarely the pleasure of seeing, in the present times, united to such beauty and accomplishments.

This compliment soothed the irritated feelings of Lord N—— ; and when his daughter ventured to enter the room again, he took no notice of her abrupt departure, but, kindly taking her hand, seated her by him ; while Lord Henry, for the first time conscious of having attracted the attention of youth and beauty, was delighted to see her return ; and when Louisa ventured to raise her eyes from the ground, she had the satisfaction of perceiving Lord Henry's fixed upon her with a look of marked approbation which she never discovered in them before.

This restored her to some degree of confidence ; and when, during some interesting conversation on national affairs, she saw that Lord Henry did her the honor to address his discourse to her as well as to her father, she ventured to look as if she understood and was interested in the subject in debate, though she properly declined joining in it.

It was late before Lord Henry retired for the night ; and he could not help saying to himself, as he laid his head on his pillow, " She is certainly the most beautiful creature I ever saw ; but it is very singular that she should be interested in reading my speeches." And so far was he from the presumption and conceit of many of his sex, that he did not see in Lord N——'s conduct any wish to engage his affection for his daughter, nor in her's a partiality in his favor, which she with difficulty concealed.

The next day, Louisa, being less embarrassed, ventured to converse with Lord Henry till his usual hour for study arrived ; when he retired to his own apartment, and read till the hour for riding came, while Louisa resumed her usual occupations ; and Lord Henry having,

while in his apartment, overheard her sing a plaintive air, well suited to her voice, he had received a degree of pleasure from her performance, which he had never experienced from music before ; and eagerly entering the room, he requested Louisa to favor him with that sweet song again.

Surprised and pleased, she immediately complied ; but her voice was gone ; and her faltering tones would have made any man but Lord Henry impute the change in her manner of singing to a cause more powerful than the mere timidity to which he attributed it.

Day succeeded to day, and still found Lord Henry talking, not love, but politics, to the flattered Louisa ; and perhaps he was the first man who ever won a woman's heart in this manner ; but Louisa was pleased to be treated as a rational being, and Lord Henry was charmed at having found a young and beautiful woman whom he could amuse and interest without flattering her charms, or decrying those of others.

Insensibly, the cold dignity of his manner relaxed, and he lingered in the breakfast room after the tea table was removed, instead of retiring as usual to his studies. The first day, Louisa beheld this novelty with a beating heart, as indicative of the increased interest which Lord Henry took in her conversation ; but when a second and third time he did the same, and even seemed to do himself great violence, while with a look, which she dared not encounter, he slowly left the room, a transport, wholly unknown before, thrilled through her frame ; and, shutting herself up in her own apartment, she sat brooding over the sweet consciousness that she was, at least, not indifferent to the object of her unqualified admiration.

Lord Henry retired for the purpose of study ; but he did not find it so easy a matter to fix his thoughts on his books as he had been accustomed to do. While he was looking apparently at the pages of Cicero's oratory, he was in reality thinking of the oratory of the dark blue eyes which he had just quitted ; and while exclaiming,

"If she had been eight-and-twenty instead of eighteen, I should certainly have been caught," he found his attention entirely diverted from his studies by a landscape from nature, drawn in water-colours by Louisa, which hung opposite to him.

"She is certainly a wonderful girl," cried Lord Henry, sighing; "as my head aches, and I cannot study, I will go ask her to take a walk." He did so; and they did not return time enough to dress before dinner, or even to enter the dining room before the first course; but Lord N—— did not chide them; he only turned away his head to hide an arch smile which took possession of his face, as Louisa, blushing, and Lord Henry apologizing, took their seats at the table.

The day after, several of the neighboring nobility and gentry were invited to dinner; and Lord Henry was surprised to find that he felt pain rather than pleasure, when he heard that his favorite young friend Lord S——, Mr K——, and several other elegant and distinguished young men, were to be of the party; and he was the more surprised, because, when he was first introduced to Louisa, he had said to himself, "She would be a charming wife for Lord S——!"

The expected party arrived; and Lord Henry, for the first time in his life, having found it a difficult matter to tie his cravat, or to decide whether he should wear powder or not, entered the drawing room, and with a sort of graceful awkwardness, if I may be allowed the expression, advanced to pay his compliments to the company. Lord S—— was seated near Louisa, and conversing with her in a very animated manner; but he rose on his entrance, and Lord Henry was conscious that the ingenuous expression of pleasure with which Lord S—— met him, did not meet with an adequate return in his salutation.

"My dear Algernon, it is an age since I have seen you," said Lord S——. "It is nearly six weeks, I believe," he coldly replied.

"O! more, much more; but I do not wonder that,

in such society," bowing to Louisa, "days seem moments, and weeks days."

Lord Henry blushed, and thought his young friend was grown very pert; nor was he displeased to see that Louisa looked grave and angry on the occasion, while her complexion, now pale and now red, betrayed strong emotion. "Why is she so agitated?" was a question which he could not help asking himself; and as he led her to her seat, he could not help gently pressing her hand as he relinquished it. He sat on one side of her, and Lord S—— on the other; and the former, who had not doubted but that the youth, wit, and uncommonly fine person of Lord S—— would withdraw Louisa's attention almost wholly from himself that day, saw with delight, wholly new and surprising to him, that she listened to his words with the same pleased and eager attention as she had ever done; that at times she nearly turned her back on Lord S——; and, when she recollected her rudeness, apologized for it with a blush of such "sweet consciousness," as made her more fascinating than ever; and, elated with a triumph which he had not dared to hope, Lord Henry, when alone in his apartment at night, owned to himself that he had never passed so happy a day; and he sighed as he exclaimed, "I wish she were eight-and-twenty, instead of eighteen!"

The ensuing evening, while Lord N——, Lord Henry, and Louisa, were sitting together, and the former, who was an active justice of the peace, had spread a number of law books before him, which he was turning over to prepare himself for some debate that was to take place at the next county meeting; he told Lord Henry that he had lately purchased a book of law reports, which he found very useful.

"Charming indeed, I dare say," replied Lord Henry, whose eyes were fixed on Louisa's profile, while she was bending her fine neck over a design for a plateau which she was drawing.

Lord N—— started; he had never heard the epithet "charming" applied to a book of law-reports before;

but, when he saw where Lord Henry's attention was directed, he found that, if not an *appropriate*, charming was a very natural word for him to have uppermost in his mind.

"You must know, Lord Henry," continued Lord N——, "that there is one decision of Lord Mansfield's in the reports I mention, in which, but with all due deference, I differ from the learned lord; and I should be very happy to submit my doubts to you, who, like myself, in the early part of your life, studied the law."

For the first time, Lord Henry felt uncomfortable at hearing the *early part of his life* mentioned—as if he was now no longer young; but he begged Lord N—— to state the case, and his objections.

Lord N—— went on; but had not read much of the case, when Lord Henry exclaimed, "Miss Howard, you want something."

"Yes; a knife to cut my pencil."

"Here is one; let me have the happiness of cutting it for you."

Lord N—— bit his lip; for, though glad to see Lord Henry's attention to his daughter, he did not like to be so completely thrown in the back ground; and he rather angrily remarked that, as the case in point was one of great importance respecting property, he could wish that Lord Henry would deign to attend to him.

He then continued; but, in five minutes, Louisa dropped her India rubber; and Lord Henry started up to seek it.

"Psha!" muttered Lord N——, closing the book.

"I beg your pardon, my lord," cried Lord Henry; "go on; and I promise you in future uninterrupted attention."

"Yes, till that girl wants her pencil cut again, I suppose, and then I shall be forgotten; no, no, I shall content myself with begging you to take the trouble of looking over this decision when you are alone in your own apartments." Lord Henry promised obedience, and the evening ended.

Three weeks had now elapsed, and still Lord Henry lingered at the castle; and had not resolution to refuse the every-day-renewed invitation of the hospitable peer, to stay longer. Louisa, indeed, never pressed him to lengthen his visit with her tongue; but she looked so grave when he talked of going, and so pleased when he consented to stay, that he could not help seeing that his society at least was dear to her.

The next evening, Lord N——, who had been absent all day, requested to know Lord Henry's opinion of the case which he had given him to read.

"My lord," returned Lord Henry blushing and stammering, "I really—I protest—I, I am quite ashamed; but I forgot, really; I have never once looked at it; but I will now go and study it." So saying, and before Lord N—— could call out that tea was coming up, Lord Henry, as much to hide his confusion as for any other reason, had hastened to his apartment; for he was conscious that his thoughts had been employed on another decision, and one of more importance in his eyes than any one even of Lord Mansfield's; he had been examining the pleadings of his own heart, and the decision of his conscience had been—that he was in love.

But as Lord N—— could not, he believed, guess how his morning hours had been employed, he feared that he must appear guilty of great neglect, and was therefore seating himself to examine the case in point, when he was summoned to tea; and he re-entered the drawing room just as Lord N—— (finding Louisa had neglected to settle some difficult accounts for him during his absence) was telling her with a mixture of fun and severity, that it was only too evident that she was *desperately in love*.

As he said this, Louisa turned round, saw Lord Henry, and knew from his countenance, that he had heard what passed. Immediately, conscience struck, and overcome with the idea that her secret was known to him, she burst into tears, and left the room.

"Poor thing! poor thing! she is grown strangely irritable," muttered Lord N——; and when he found Lord Henry in the room, he did not wonder at Louisa's emotion; but he saw, and with ill-suppressed joy, that Lord Henry looked as disturbed and as foolish as she had done; and that, soon after tea, at which Louisa, on pretence of head-ache, declined appearing, he too, pleaded indisposition, and begged leave to retire and sit alone.

Indeed, he had need of solitude; for, not daring to think that if Louisa was in love, (of which Lord N——'s exclamation of "Poor thing!" made it impossible for him to doubt) he was the object of her attachment, he saw himself, in his opinion, "entangled in a hopeless passion!"

Yes, he indeed loved, and with a devotedness, and exclusion of every other idea, that astonished him. He had yet to learn, that love knows not a divided empire, and reigns a tyrant if he reigns at all. He had flattered himself, like many men of superior intelligence, but more conversant with books than the human heart, that he, when he loved, should love like a being of superior rationality; that is, should love as much as reason warranted, but no more. Alas! he soon found, that to control his passion by reason was impossible; that his books ceased to interest him; that *amor patriæ* seemed a feeling too abstracted for a sensitive being to busy himself with; and after he had convinced himself that his love was as rationally founded, if not more so, than that of any man who ever loved before, he proved that he was up to all the frenzy of passion, by catching himself repeating—

"Louisa, who'd ever be wise,
If madness be loving of thee?"

"Yes, yes," said Lord Henry, pacing the room as he spoke, "it is certain she has an attachment, and who can be the object of it? She does me the honor to esteem me and admire my conversation, and therefore I have been able, by my society, to beguile her of her

cares ; but to suppose that she felt more than friendship for me, would be both absurd and improbable. Yet, why ? It is not more improbable than that I should have fallen in love with her ;” and his steps became quicker, as the thought of being beloved thrilled through his whole frame.

But he soon sunk into despondency again—and he convinced himself that Louisa was attached to some young man, not her equal in fortune ; and that Lord N—— had forbidden their union. “ If so,” said Lord Henry to himself, “ I will be her friend ; I will try to prevail on her to confide in me ; and if I be right in my conjectures, I will endeavor to conquer her father’s objections ; yes, I will make her happy, though at the risk of making myself—Psha !—the thought is madness !”

Here, he threw himself across the bed, absorbed in gloomy reflections. At last, he started up, and exclaimed, “ Yes—it shall be so !—Yes—I shall never marry ; my fortune is large ; and if fortune be the only obstacle, I will—yes—I will do something that shall prove I am not unworthy the high idea she entertains of my character ;” and, resolving to prove himself a great hero, Lord Henry luckily fell asleep ; but his rest was broken and disturbed ; and he arose the next morning not at all improved in beauty by the agitation of his mind.

“ How old I look !” cried he, as he stood at the glass ; —“ No, no ; it is impossible that I can be beloved by her ; fool that I was not to see the danger which I was incurring !”

Louisa had also passed a sleepless night, for she feared that her secret was discovered, and that the impression which she had reason to think she had made on Lord Henry’s heart, would be destroyed by the disgust which the knowledge of her weakness might excite in him. She therefore, like Lord Henry, appeared at the breakfast table with pale cheeks and sunk eyes ; and each of them, from different feelings, carefully avoided looking at the other.

After breakfast, when they were alone together, Lord

Henry, while debating with himself whether he should speak to her according to his plan of the night before, happening to cast his eyes on her, was so shocked at the mournful expression of her countenance, and at her altered appearance, that he could not bear to defer the intended conversation one moment longer—but hastily seizing her hand, he exclaimed, “Dear, dear Miss Howard! I see, with agony unspeakable, that you are unhappy, and that some secret cause is wearing away your peace;—alas! I guess what the cause is; and would to heaven it were in my power to remove it! But that, I doubt, is impossible; still—” here he paused; for Louisa, convinced by this speech that he saw her love for him, and meant to say that he vainly wished to return it, had fallen back in her chair nearly insensible.

She soon, however, recovered herself; when, in his terror at her situation, she heard Lord Henry make use of such expressions, and saw him hang over her with such tenderness, as convinced her that she was beloved, and that she had misunderstood his meaning; and assuring him that she was quite well again, she begged him to go on with the conversation which her illness had interrupted.

He did so; and to the surprise of Louisa, she found that Lord Henry, so far from imagining himself beloved by her, suspected that she loved another; and offered, though at the expense of his own happiness, to be the mediator between her and her father!

“Generous man!” cried Louisa, bursting into tears, “how little do you know my heart!”

“You have read mine, Louisa,” replied Lord Henry; “be equally ingenuous and—”

At this moment Lord N—— entered; and Louisa, finding herself at a loss how to answer Lord Henry’s last address, took that opportunity of retiring.

“I am afraid, my Lord Henry Algernon,” said Lord N—— with affected gravity, “that my entrance was very *mal-a-propos*; Miss Howard and you seemed rehearsing a very dismal scene together, and one not at all in my way.”

"You have a right, my lord, to know all that has passed," replied Lord Henry. "You have led me to think that Miss Howard has an attachment—and an unhappy one; for I attribute her frequent agitation to the consciousness that the object of her love will never be approved by you."

"The object of her love, Lord Henry, is approved by me, from the very bottom of my soul."

Lord Henry turned pale, and sunk into a chair; for he found that the imagined obstacle did not exist, and his intended and painful act of *heroism* would be of no avail; besides, he now found that when the evil he feared was certain, it was not to be borne with any thing like fortitude.

"You are ill, Algernon; you are ill; what is the matter?"

"Oh, my lord," replied Lord Henry, "I find I am a poor, weak being. I began this conversation, resolved to try to prevail on you to consent to your daughter's union with the man of her choice; and to do all I could to remove the obstacles to it; but I find that no obstacles exist, and all my boasted heroism is entirely gone."

"And why should my daughter's union with the man of her heart make you unhappy?" asked the malicious Lord N——.

"Because—do not despise me for my weakness and presumption—because—I love her myself!"

Lord N—— immediately gave way to a long, deliberate laugh, which caused Lord Henry to rise from his seat with great indignation.

"Nay, Algernon, don't be angry," cried he; "but I must laugh, upon my honor I must. Go, go—you are a very clever fellow; but I believe that in knowledge of the heart of a woman, there is not a boor on my estate who is not your superior; there, go and find Louisa; tell her what you have told me; and tell her also, that I command her to let her answer be open and explicit—for that, if she will not speak out, I will speak for her."

"Is it possible? can it be?" exclaimed Lord Henry, trembling with joyful anticipation.

"I shall tell you nothing more, Algernon; only remember, that I shall stay here to give you both my blessing, when you think proper to ask it."

Lord Henry instantly ran in search of Louisa; he found her in the garden; and saw her tremble and turn pale at his approach, from a mixture of modesty and joy, for she knew by his countenance that an explanation had taken place between him and Lord N——. In a few minutes, as it appeared to the lovers, but in an hour, as it really was, Lord Henry led Louisa to Lord N——, and claimed the promised blessing.

In a very few weeks after, the marriage took place; but on the wedding-day, a proud day for Louisa, though she was the rich heiress of Lord N——, as it made her the wife of one of the most distinguished men in England; yes, even on that welcome day which gave her to the idol of her heart, her happiness was overclouded by the consciousness of not deserving it, and the conviction, that on Lord Henry's ignorance of her character was founded his affection for her. She knew, that were he acquainted with her extravagance and her habits of self-indulgence, he could not honor her with his love, because he must withhold his esteem.

But how should he become acquainted with the errors, the past errors as she called them, which disgraced her? They were known only to herself, and those who could have no motive to disclose them to Lord Henry; and, in spite of her usual hatred of disguise, she felt rejoiced that her foibles were not written on her brow.

On their return from church, Lord N—— took the bride and bridegroom into his study; and again joining their hands and blessing them, he said, in a faltering voice, and smiling through his tears, "You meant, you know, Algernon, to play the hero, and try to make my girl happy with the man of her heart, though by so doing you made yourself miserable; but, luckily, you were spared those heroic doings and sufferings; and now if there be any hero amongst us, it is myself. Here

am I parting with my only child, the pride and delight of my age, and pretending to be jocose while my heart is bursting."

Here he gave way to a flood of tears, in which even Lord Henry was not ashamed to join.

"But I knew it was for Louisa's happiness, so I will be consoled; I knew she would marry; it was natural that she should; therefore, all I wished was, that her choice should be one approved by the feelings both of her heart and mine, and which should confer honor and happiness on both. In short, I fixed on you, Algernon, and Louisa did the same; so, take her, as I said before, and God bless you both! She is a treasure, I assure you; perhaps I am partial; but I really do believe that she has not a fault in the world."

"O! my father!" cried Louisa bursting into a flood of tears, wrung from her by remorse and consciousness, "you are partial, indeed; believe him not, Lord Henry; I am faulty, very faulty; and—"

Lord Henry clasped her to his bosom, protesting that he believed her father's testimony rather than her own.

No faults! Alas! she had faults hanging like a blight over the promising harvest of her happiness; though, in the self-flattery of her heart, she fancied that the blight was past, and nought but healthy sunshine near.

Just before the marriage, Louisa received, from the lavish bounty of her father, a considerable sum of money to expend on wedding finery; and never was money more welcome, nor more wanted—for her creditors, both in town and country, had been clamorous for payment; and had they not been so, a feeling of honor, as well as of shame and apprehension, forbade Louisa to load with her debts the loved and revered being whom she was going to make her protector and monitor through life.

"No!" she exclaimed, "with this money I will pay my present debts; and at the same time make a solemn resolution to incur no future ones."

The first part of her resolution she immediately ful-

filled, and, instead of purchasing bridal ornaments and expensive dresses, contented herself with simple though elegant attire, such as the slender state of her finances warranted; while every one who knew the generous temper of Lord N——, and who expected to see it displayed in his daughter's appearance as a bride, gazed on her *simple attire* with wonder. No one was more surprised than Lord N—— himself; and, but from unexpected circumstances, Louisa would have been under the necessity of owning the truth to him; but he, and indeed many of his acquaintance, aware of Louisa's profuse generosity, suspected that she had bestowed in acts of secret benevolence, the money given her for the decoration of her person; and Lord N——, making his parental pride amends by imparting these suspicions to others, for the gratification of which his daughter's plain appearance as a bride deprived him, at length declared his ideas on this subject to Louisa herself, and in the presence of her husband.

The conscious Louisa started, and blushed deeply at a supposition so false, and yet so flattering; and, had she been alone with Lord N——, would have had virtue enough, perhaps, to have avowed the truth, and scorned to receive praise while certain of deserving censure; but Lord Henry, who till then had not observed the simplicity of his bride's attire, gazed on her with looks of such approving delight, when he heard the modesty of her apparel attributed to a cause so noble, that she had not resolution enough to destroy an illusion so gratifying to him, and so flattering to herself; and casting her eyes on the ground, while the blush of conscious duplicity glowed on her cheek, she remained in an equivocal silence, which confirmed Lord N—— in his suspicions, and gave to her the amiable semblance of a benevolent being, doing "good by stealth, and blushing to find it *lame*."

Alas! trifling as this little circumstance seemed even to Louisa, who varnished over its culpability, representing to herself that a disclosure of the truth would have

been cruel to her husband and dangerous to her own peace, it had a pernicious influence on her future conduct. *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute* ; and she who had once compromised so far with her conscience as to resist the pleadings of sincerity, and be contented to be praised for actions which she never performed, has laid the foundation stone of future vice, and tarnished, perhaps for life, the fair image of virtue in her bosom.

But Louisa did not reason thus, though her feelings were continually reproaching her ; and scarcely could she support herself under the variety of emotions which assailed her, when Lord Henry, as soon as they were alone together, told her, that as he found she was likely to make so good an almoner, he should entrust to her many sums of which he had been in the habit of disposing himself. " O ! do not trust me !" was almost on her lips ; for the feeling of her frailty was throbbing painfully at her heart ; but again she struggled with her best feelings ; again shame and pride got the better of sincerity, and the once habitual ingenuousness of her nature received its death-blow.

And what consoled her under the consciousness of her guilt ? The conviction that Lord Henry, while deceived, was happy ; that a mind so honorable as his, and which had such high ideas of female excellence, would start back with horror at the idea of her thoughtless extravagance, and that with his esteem she should also lose his love.

Lord Henry thought the same ; he imagined that he could not love a woman whom he did not esteem, and that tenderness would cease at the first known cessation of that excellence which had originally produced it. He knew more of human knowledge than of human passions ; he had read ; he had thought ; he had *reasoned* ; but he had only now learnt to *feel* ; and he felt deeply. The present enchanted him ; the future smiled on him ; and, incapable of supposing that the fair creature to whom every faculty of his soul was devoted, could have even the germ of any vice in her likely to

destroy her happiness and his own, he looked upon that hour of his existence as lost in which he had never loved, or been beloved, and pitied every man who was not, like himself, a husband.

For months this state of enjoyment lasted. Louisa, passionately attached to her husband, and living wholly in the country, where she had no temptation to indulge in those expensive habits so prejudicial to her respectability, was deserving of all the fondness which Lord Henry lavished on her; and, with the sanguine self-love of eighteen, she thought her only fault was cured, merely because she was not in circumstances to call it into action.

The spring was now advancing; and as the metropolis was beginning to fill, Louisa could not conceal from herself that she should like to exhibit her lovely form in the fashionable circles, as the bride of Lord Henry Algernon; it was with ill suppressed pleasure, therefore, that she heard Lord Henry inform her, his duty in Parliament now required his constant residence for some months in town, and that he must, though with extreme reluctance, give up the happiness of a country life, for the empty bustle of town amusements.

To London they went; and Louisa, thinking she had earned by months of self-denial a right to relax in her economy, drove to her old milliner's as soon as she arrived, in order to lay out some of her husband's newly received bounty in a court dress and other dresses; but she wisely and firmly resolved, that she would pay for every thing as soon as it was finished, and on no account contract any more debts. The dresses were finished; and the bill being, though with great difficulty, procured, Louisa, accompanied by a young lady who was to visit with her as bride maid, went the morning after to discharge it.

While the account was settling, various were the temptations to fresh expenses thrown in Louisa's way; but she disregarded them all—when her young companion who was more favored by nature than fortune, was struck with the beauty of a turban spotted with silver; and,

putting it on, she looked so beautiful in it, that every one in the room exclaimed, "You must buy it, you never looked so well in any head dress before!"

"But I can't afford to buy it," cried the mortified girl; "I am not a rich bride, like Lady Henry."

"You soon would be a bride, I am sure, madam," replied the artful milliner, "if you were to wear that turban; it seems made on purpose for you."

"Well, dear me! I will go home, and ask mamma to let me have it."

"O, madam, it will be gone directly; you can't be sure of it, unless you take it now—and it will take some time to get another done."

"Bless me! what can I do? I can't pay for it myself."

"O, madam, I will trust you."

"Aye, but I dare not run in debt; mamma would never forgive me; yet I am so tempted!"

Louisa heaved a deep sigh at the danger of her young friend; nor could she help blaming herself severely for having so hastily expended on her own person the noble bounty of her husband; because, had she been less indulgent to herself, she would have been able, without a fault, to ornament the lovely person of her friend.

"What shall I do, dear Lady Henry?" said Miss Selby; "what do you advise me to do? Shall I take the turban on trust?"

"No, you must not disobey your mother on any account; and believe me, that a habit of running in debt once acquired, is scarcely ever to be conquered."

"But then, what can I do?" replied Miss Selby pettishly, "for I must and will have the turban, that's certain."

"Then I must give it to you as a present," replied Lady Henry sighing; and, after a pause, she added, "Let it be set down to my account;" then, with a reproving conscience she hastened into her carriage; but, when there, the rapturous thanks of Miss Selby in a degree reconciled her to herself; but when one has broken through a wise and virtuous resolution, where is

the opiate that can at first succeed in lulling one's self reproaches to rest !

The next day, Louisa was prevailed upon by Miss Selby to go with her and another young lady to the same milliner's, that the latter might order a turban in all respects like Miss Selby's.

They had not been long in the room before a new invented mantle, which no one had yet seen, was displayed ; and by the officious zeal of her companions, urged by the milliner, it was thrown over the graceful shoulders of Louisa.

"O, madam, were you to wear that mantle, my fortune would be made," cried the specious milliner.

"Do, buy it, pray do," cried both the girls, "it is so becoming to you !"

The looking-glass unfortunately told Louisa the same thing ; but then, her resolution not to run up a bill ! Then, on the other hand, a bill was begun for Miss Selby's turban, and this would add only twenty guineas to it. At last, however, she summoned all her resolution to her aid, and running into her carriage, removed from the temptation which she had not power to face and resist.

In the evening, Miss Selby, in presence of Lord N——, reproached Louisa with her ill-timed economy ; and his lordship declared that if twenty guineas would purchase the elegant ornament in question, he would give his daughter that sum immediately. This offer Louisa thankfully accepted ; and she reflected, with no small delight, that her self-denial and resolution in the morning, had now met with their reward. It was then agreed that the money should be immediately sent, and the mantle purchased, in order that Lord N—— should see it, and be able to judge of the beauty and value of the present. Louisa, therefore, took the money, and left the room in order to write a note with it to the milliner, when she was informed that a poor woman, whose name she well knew, earnestly requested to see her ;

she instantly desired her to be shewn into her dressing-room.

This distressed object, as she really was, had often been relieved by her bounty; but never had she told so piteous a tale before, and never had her distress been so great. Never had Louisa been so perplexed; she could not bear to send her away unrelieved, yet she had not the means of relieving her, for she had already sufficiently taxed the generosity of her husband and her father; and the sum requisite to remove the poor woman's present wants was not less than several guineas, and Louisa had them not to give.

But at this moment she held the twenty guineas in her hand, designed for the mantle; and, as her fingers grasped them, a pang of something very like remorse shot across her mind, and she mentally exclaimed, "What! shall I prefer the gratification of my vanity to the permanent relief of a distressed fellow creature? No; the sacrifice shall be made;" and immediately summoning a confidential servant, she gave him fifteen guineas, and desiring him to accompany the poor woman home, ordered him to lay out whatever part of the sum was necessary, in removing her present difficulties, and ensuring the future comfort of her and her family; and then, having dismissed the object of her bounty, was on the point of re-entering the drawing-room, when Miss Selby entered, crying, "Well, is the mantle arrived? I am so anxious for its coming!—for we all agreed that you must go in it to Lady D——'s assembly to night; for you would not use Mrs C—— well, if you did not wear it directly."

"Nonsense" replied Louisa; "I have not sent for it, nor do I know that I shall; I don't want it."

Nothing could equal Miss Selby's surprise at this speech; at first she was silent with astonishment; but when she recovered herself, such was the eloquent volubility with which she expatiated on Lord N——'s disappointment, on the beauty of the mantle, on its becomingness to Lady Henry's shape, on its being a duty

which she owed the inventor to shew it off to the best advantage, (which her wearing it would certainly do,) that Louisa lamented in secret her inability to gratify her vanity and her benevolence at the same time; especially as she knew not how to excuse to Lord N—— not expending the money for the purpose for which he gave it; as she could not do this without telling him the use which she had made of it; and had, besides a graceful unwillingness to disclose her bounty, a certain consciousness that her father, who often laughed at her romantic charities, would in this instance, and with some justice, say, that she had given more than the urgent necessity of the case required.

At length, overpowered by the entreaties of her young companion, and urged by her own weakness, she resolved to send for the mantle, though unable to pay for it; and Mrs C—— was desired to place the mantle to her account, as well as the turban.

Alas! in all of us, how quickly a vice treads on the heels of a virtue! To be brief; Louisa had now completely broken the wise resolution never to run in debt again, and in a manner almost resembling a good action; and now to stop herself in this fatal career was impossible; debt succeeded to debt, incurred either to gratify her own wants, or those of her friends; she became the arbiter and idol of fashion, extravagance succeeded to extravagance, and when the time for leaving town arrived, she found herself infinitely more involved than she was before she married.

True it was that Lord Henry, aware that her expenses, from her rank in life and situation as a bride, must have been extraordinary, presented her with a considerable sum of money; but, conscious of her embarrassments, and eager to try any means, however desperate, of extricating herself, in a moment of rashness she had allowed herself to be seduced to join a party of fashionable gamblers, and she lost in two sittings the well meant bounty of her confiding and unsuspecting husband.

I will not attempt to describe her feelings, when, con-

scious of conduct which must, if known, for ever forfeit the esteem of Lord Henry, she turned her back on the mischievous pleasures of the metropolis, and returned to those scenes, a self-convicted culprit, which she left full of self-confidence and virtuous exultation.

Lord Henry saw the gloom that hung on her brow, but attributed it entirely to fatigue, from the constant routine of visiting to which she had been obliged; and while he tenderly soothed, fondly caressed her, welcomed her with unabated affection to their country abode, and called her the pride as well as happiness of his life, conscience-struck and overwhelmed with self-reproaches, she sunk into his arms, and was conveyed to her chamber in a state of insensibility.

Salutary are the pangs of conscience, when the person tortured by them is left at full leisure to feel their corroding power; but this was not the case with Louisa; in less than a month a number of gay and invited friends came down to spend some weeks at their house, and she had scarcely a moment for serious reflection.

The dissipated, and the inventive, had always some plan of expensive amusement to offer, some tempting proposal for new decorations, or improvements, of the house or grounds; and Louisa having once been led to own that she should delight to give a *fete champetre*, her giddy friend Miss Selby, and some others of the gay group, ran immediately to Lord Henry to inform him how eagerly his wife desired this enchanting entertainment.

For one moment, Lord Henry, on hearing this, doubted whether his wife was as free from female folly as his doting fancy had painted her; but, the next instant, he recollected that complaisance merely, perhaps, had led her to approve of a scheme so fantastic; and he coolly replied, that if Lady Henry really wished to give a *fete* of that description, he should certainly consent to it, as his fondest wish was to gratify all her inclinations.

He then accompanied the self-appointed ambadress to Louisa, who heard with painful confusion what had passed, as she was conscious that if her husband knew to

how much her yearly expenditure had amounted, he would have thought it imprudent, even with his ample fortune; to indulge in expenses of such a nature.

But in vain did she assure Lord Henry that she had no wish to give the *fete* in question. Her generous husband, convinced that she refused to own her wishes merely from a principle of prudence highly honorable to her, was the more eager to indulge her; and Louisa not only was obliged at last to allow this costly entertainment to take place, but saw herself forced to incur, on account of it, many personal expenses which she might otherwise have avoided.

Under these painful embarrassments, she had sometimes thoughts of applying to Lord N—— for relief; but she knew that as her mother's fortune came to her on her marriage, his lordship's income was so greatly reduced, that he could scarcely keep up the state requisite to his rank; therefore she felt, but too truly, that all she had to do was to bear her well merited distress in patience and in silence, while, though delighting in her husband's society, and in reality prizing nothing so highly, the consciousness of having acted in a manner unworthy of his wife, made her shrink appalled from moments of unreserved and solitary conversation with him, and fly eagerly to the society of those, who, by their folly or their wit, could banish reflection, and substitute glittering gaiety for the more chaste splendor of that cheerfulness which springs from a heart at peace with itself.

Amongst those whom Louisa selected as capable of banishing unpleasant reflections from her mind, was a Mr Trelawney; a man in the prime of life, well born, well connected, (for the blood of several noble families mingled in his veins,) and who had improved his natural graces by several years residence in foreign courts.

Mr Trelawney had specious and amusing if not sterling talents; he wrote pretty verses, told stories with considerable humor, had always *le mot pour rire*, as the French say, and was particularly happy in giving in

conversation rapid sketches of the prominent traits of character in his acquaintance ; a talent by which we are all fond of being amused when it is exercised on others, but which we are not disposed to regard with complacency when we have reason to suspect it exercised on ourselves.

In short, he was calculated to inspire almost every feeling but that of *confidence* ; for to a discerning eye, he always appeared a masked battery ; while his lips uttered moral sentiments, his looks alarmed apprehensive modesty by their libertine expression ; and while kindness and admiration were the language of his tongue, his eye seemed to threaten sarcasm ; and while it smiling seemed to invite to unreserve, it was in reality on the watch, seeking prey for satire and severity.

But sarcasm and the point of fashionable satire were not all the danger to be apprehended from Mr Tre-lawney ; he was a libertine, not so much from passion as from system ; he laid it down as a maxim that every woman was inclined to gallantry, and that every man was therefore justified in putting it in her power to gratify her inclinations.

He was convinced that every woman's honor might be made the victim of attack, if the engines of fear, shame, interest, or vanity, were employed against it ; and he did not believe any of the sex to be capable of remaining virtuous, if exposed to a strong temptation to be otherwise.

Accordingly, though he was called a very good husband, wrote verses to his wife on the birth of every child, and on the anniversaries of their marriage, he was the willing slave, and ruler in expectation, of each new beauty who blazed in the sphere of fashion.

Louisa Howard, in spite of all her loveliness and talents, he had always neglected ; but Lady Henry Algernon, the wife of a man whose superiority of abilities he had often felt, admired, and envied, was a conquest worthy of his genius ; and while he enumerated to himself her graces, her beauties, and her accomplishments,

and thought of her increasing celebrity, "All these," he triumphantly exclaimed, "shall be made minister to my pleasure, or my ambition;" and the siege was immediately begun; but neither avowedly nor actively. He had penetration and knowledge of character, and he did justice to the virtues of Louisa; for he saw that she had *then* at least no disposition to gallantry and intrigue, as he knew that she was passionately devoted to her husband.

The other pretenders to the favor of Louisa, superficial, thoughtless, indiscriminating men of fashion, flattered themselves that she must have a heart to bestow, and that they might become objects of her preference, because they were sure it was impossible that she should love Lord Henry.

"And why impossible?" said Trelawney one day to some of these weak observers.

"O, because he is near twenty years older than she is, and is such an ugly fellow; besides, he is so ill dressed, and so grave; nay you must own that she could not marry him for love."

Trelawney turned away, smiling contemptuously; for he knew that she *did* marry for love, and that his chance for success in his pursuit was not at all to be founded on her probable preference of him in process of time, but on certain weaknesses of character which, even while he was the object rather of her dislike than her love, would put her happiness entirely in his power.

He had seen in her a degree of irresolution, and indecision, and an inability to withstand temptation, though her reason immediately pointed out the folly of compliance, on which he founded his expectations of becoming the arbiter of her fate; while, as he never offended her principles by any marked and improper attention, Louisa treated him with a degree of confidence and unreserve which enabled him to gain a great ascendancy over her, and made the plan he had in view more easy of execution.

In the ensuing February, Lord Henry and Louisa re-

turned to London; the former dissatisfied with his residence in the country that year, because his house had been rarely free from company; and firmly resolved, that the next summer his domestic enjoyments should not be so broken in upon.

He would have been seriously alarmed, as well as displeased, had he known that after he had retired to his own apartment to read an hour or two before he went to bed, cards had been the amusement of his guests; and that Louisa, having not had resolution to fortify high play, nor even to forbear joining in it, had often seen some of her gay companions lose sums so considerable, as to change their thoughtless smiles into frowns of anguish, and had frequently stolen to his side herself, heated by the suspense, and tortured by the sorrows of a gamester.

How would he also have been distressed, had he known that creditors, clamorous creditors, awaited the wife of his heart in the metropolis; and that the pale cheek which excited his fears, and which with unabated fondness he pressed to his, was robbed of its bloom by the corroding consciousness of error, and the dread of impending detection!

"This last has been an expensive year," said Lord Henry to his too conscious wife; "but it was our bridal year, and therefore I bless even its extravagance. I hope we shall now be allowed to live a little for ourselves; however, we must also live a little for the world; so here, my love, is fuel for fresh follies—here is a bank note for five hundred pounds for you, to begin the season with."

Luckily for Louisa, on saying this he left the room, and witnessed not the mixed emotions which agitated and overwhelmed her, as she gazed on this unsolicited and magnificent instance of her husband's bounty, and knew how insufficient it was to obtain her more than momentary ease. She immediately, however, demanded the bills of her largest and more importunate creditors, bills delivered again and again, and resolved, faithfully to discharge them.

While the bank note remained on the table, Trelawney entered ; and finding it belonged to Louisa, and had just been given to her by her husband, he congratulated her on Lord Henry's generosity, and on the means it gave her of gratifying all her propensities, however expensive. Louisa blushed, turned the conversation immediately, and, soon after, he departed.

That evening they met at the house of a lady of quality, where, at the close of an entertainment, cards were commonly introduced ; and many a thoughtless victim, confiding in the lateness of the time of night for the temptation's being of short duration, had frequently in one short hour lost more than months of economy have been able to replace.

Louisa was at this place of danger without Lord Henry, who was attending his duty in parliament ; but his recent bounty having put it in her power to quiet some of her most urgent creditors, the sense of present and pressing embarrassments did not now excite her to play for the chance of extricating herself ; and she was preparing to return home, when Mr Trelawney entreated her not to leave the company so early, but join their party at cards.

Louisa refused for some time firmly enough, till Trelawney, on her saying she could not afford to play, reminded her of the bill which she had received that morning, and asked her, with such a purse as that how she could possibly be poor ; "for," added he, "surely you have not spent it all since morning ! and I conclude that you have no debts ; or if you have, surely you are too wise to pay them."

Louisa blushed, and so guiltily, that Trelawney was convinced she *had* debts, and that the bill was already gone ; and artfully exclaimed, "Well, Lady Henry, if you persist in resolving not to hazard a few guineas, on the pretence of poverty, I must conclude that you have either extravagantly squandered in one day several hundred pounds, or that some hungry creditors have unmercifully devoured it."

Had Louisa boasted the self-respect which she once possessed, her reply would have been such as so impertinent a speech deserved. Of what importance to Trelawney was it that Louisa declined play, or that prudence or poverty had its share in her determination? But, conscious how well Trelawney had divined both her character and her real situation, and averse to confirm his suspicions by continuing to decline playing, she forced a faint smile at his impertinence, as she called it, and, producing a few guineas, sat down to the table.

She played; she won; and, elated by her success, and knowing Lord Henry would be detained at the house to a late hour, continued to play, till, unceasingly urged on by the sneers or entreaties of Trelawney, the bill itself was produced, and nearly the whole of it lost before the party broke up.

At day-break Louisa returned home, self-abased, self-condemned; and when Lord Henry came back from the house, his heart glowing with the consciousness of having done his duty to his country, his wife, instead of welcoming him with wakeful fondness, and demanding from him a detail of what had passed, was glad to feign sleep to avoid his inquiring eyes, and to conceal what was too legibly written on her countenance—that while he had been scrupulously fulfilling *his* duty, she had been grossly violating hers.

The next morning, the tradesmen who had been appointed to come and receive their money, called, but in vain; and as they were departing, Trelawney appeared. He soon found out their business; and his suspicions being awakened by what passed the night before, he contrived to see Louisa's maid, a girl whom he had long known, and who made no scruple of owning to him that her mistress owed a great deal of money, and lived in daily terrors lest her lord should discover it.

"What then," said Trelawney, "she is afraid of his violence, is she?"

"O no—quite the contrary; but my lady loves him so dearly, that she is afraid to grieve him, I fancy, and also to make him think ill of her."

"I was right, then," thought Trelawney; "and this terror and this tender apprehension will I turn to my own advantage."

A very few days after, the disappointed creditors renewed their demands, with the addition of some other claimants; and artfully contriving to call when they had learnt from the servants their master and mistress were most likely to be together, they were all delivered while Lord Henry was breakfasting with his wife, who, for an instant, was gone into the next room.

"What have we here?" cried he, taking up the papers, some of which were sealed, some open; "How is this?—bills! and some of a year's standing! Louisa," he added, as, pale as death she re-entered the room, "I thought I gave you money when we left town last year to discharge all these accounts?"

"You did so."

"Then why were they not discharged?" Louisa answered not, but sunk, almost fainting, into a chair; while Lord Henry, nearly as pale as herself, perused the bills, and found that they amounted to considerably more than two thousand pounds! What a blow to a husband who doted as he did on his wife, and who believed that she had not a fault in the world!

After a silence of considerable length, during which time Lord Henry paced the room in violent agitation, while Louisa, leaning on a table, hid her face in her hands, unable to endure the sight of the agony which she occasioned, her unhappy husband, with great effort said, "This is a weighty demand on me, madam, and one for which I am wholly *unprepared*; but these debts shall be discharged as soon as I can procure the money. I have never been in the habit of making a tradesman wait for his money myself, and I will, as far as in me lies, extricate my wife from the disgrace of being known to pursue a different line of conduct. In the mean while, madam, I will trouble you to lend me the bill which I gave you a few mornings ago; unless, indeed, it has been employed in the payment of other debts."

Louisa, at this moment, rendered desperate by the cold and scornful manner in which Lord Henry spoke, and convinced that his good opinion was entirely lost, resolved to confess all her errors; and raising her head from her hands, she replied, "I have not the money to give you; it is all gone."

"Gone! Was it expended in the payment of debts?"

"I intended it should be so," she answered; "and some of the tradesmen, whose bills you have just been examining, came hither by appointment the day after I received the money, to receive the amount of their debts; but—"

"But what?" eagerly interrupted Lord Henry.

"The night before," continued she, in a tone of tearless emotion, "I—I lost nearly the whole sum at cards."

Lord Henry, on hearing this, clasped his hands in agony; then exclaiming, "And she *games* too!" he rushed out of the room, and shut himself up in his own apartment.

It was then mid-day, and at seven o'clock he was to go to the house in order to resume the debate of the night before; but, alas! the noble daring of the patriot and the fire of the orator were quenched in domestic affliction; and he, on whose accents the preceding night an applauding senate had hung, and had looked up to his talents as its hope and its pride, now bowed to the earth by disappointment "where he had garnered up his soul," was now thrown across his bed, overwhelmed in the deepest anguish, and had forgotten all the ardor of the politician in the woes of the husband. At length, however, he made a vigorous effort, and shaking off the selfish despondence which oppressed him, repaired to the scene of his public and now painful duty.

Louisa, meanwhile, denied to every one, and in a state of mind even more wretched than that of her husband, passed the day in her own room, a stranger both to appetite and rest. Night came, but she could not prevail on herself to go to bed; and she sat up, anxiously expecting, yet dreading, the return of her husband.

Her own maid, who was tenderly attached to her, suspecting the cause of her grief, and knowing that Lord Henry had left the house without taking leave of her, resolved to sit up also, and meet him when he returned, to inform him of the state in which her lady was. She did so, and appeared before him with so perturbed an air, that Lord Henry anxiously and eagerly asked if any thing was the matter.

"My lady, sir," she replied, struggling with her tears—

"What of your lady?" said he; "for God's sake, speak!"

"Only, my lord, she is very ill, I am afraid; she has been on the sofa all day, and has eaten nothing; but I could not prevail on her to go to bed till your lordship came home."

Lord Henry heaved a deep sigh, and repaired to his own apartment. "So," cried he to himself, when there—"no self-command, not the least; her distress, and the cause, no doubt known by this time to all the servants!—But still—would not self-command have been in this case, little better than an aptitude at dissembling? Yes, yes. O, Louisa, would that this want of self-government were *all* thy fault! Then again, she could eat, she could laugh, while conscious of committing these despicable errors; but now she is detected, she sickens and she sighs. Ah! I fear it is only the detection, not the crime, which agonizes her. And from what a dream of bliss have I been awakened! The delusion was so sweet, that the reality which now bursts upon me is more than I have fortitude to bear with composure; but she is very, very young." And Louisa would not have been *flattered*, had she known how often her husband found it necessary to recollect this circumstance, and how often he repeated, "she is so very, very young!"

In soliloquies and reflections like these, and in walking up and down the room, he passed the greatest part of the night; and it was quite morning before he ventured to enter the chamber of Louisa; while the reporters of the newspapers, who had been lavish in their praises of

his eloquence the preceding day, were preparing to inform the world that Lord Henry Algernon was not as conspicuous and animated as usual, in the last night's debate, and had the appearance of laboring under a severe cold.

O woman, woman ! while such is your influence—while your guilt can unman a hero, palsy the firm nerves of a patriot, and rob an orator of his eloquence—how great should be your discretion, and how cautiously should you use the power which the Creator of the world has given you !

When Lord Henry entered Louisa's room, he found her traversing it with rapid and disordered steps ; she started and turned pale on seeing him ; and then walked silently away.

"Why are you not in bed ?" said he, in a faltering voice ; for the wo visible on her countenance had wounded him to the soul, and his heart again whispered him—"she is very, very young."

"To bed !" replied Louisa ; "I cannot sleep—I believe," she added, holding her hand to her head, "that I shall never sleep again."

"Are you so self-condemned, then ?" said Lord Henry.

"That I have long been."

"And yet the reproaches of your own conscience; the dreadful pangs which, more than any thing else, are the terror of the virtuous, *those* you could *endure*—but the dread of mine, I see, *overwhelms* you. I had rather that you had been more in awe of your own."

"Then you must wish me not to love you," she replied. "While I possessed your love and your esteem, for which alone I wish to live, even though conscious of not deserving them, I was happy ; I now feel that I have lost them, lost them through my own mad folly ; for I have heard you say that you could not love, for a moment, the woman whom you had ceased to esteem." Here her voice failed, and she burst into tears.

"Yes, I have often said so," replied Lord Henry deeply sighing ; and Louisa continued, "I know it ; and

I know that you have resolution to act up to whatever is your sense of right."

"You think so!" again sighed Lord Henry.

"I therefore wish, ardently wish, that I may not long survive this moment. All I dare to ask of you is this, that you will keep my delinquency a secret from my poor father; he has often sworn that he never would forgive me, if he knew that I had ever played; and I wish, besides, to spare him the pain of knowing the unworthiness of his child, of whom he is now so proud."

"Rest assured," returned Lord Henry, "that I will spare him the mournful recital; I cannot be barbarous enough to inflict such a pang on him. Alas! I feel only too acutely myself the misery of being forced to think meanly of a being whom I considered as a model of every excellence. Oh, Louisa?" he exclaimed, tears forcing their way down his manly cheek, "how happy we have been!"

All that his wretched wife had suffered before was nothing to the agony of that moment. The sight of his tears rendered her frantic; she fell at his feet, she implored his pardon; she tore her hair, she uttered convulsive sobs; till at length, worn out by the violence of her feelings, she was undressed, and laid insensible in her bed. From that state she fell into a deep, though perturbed, sleep; and when she awoke, she found that her head reclined on the arm of her husband!! I will not attempt to describe her feelings.

"It was your *first* fault," said he, kissing her pale cheek, "and I forgive you; but beware a *second*. I know that modern wives and modern husbands would laugh our distress on this occasion to scorn; but I look on myself as accountable to the being who gave me wealth, for the use to which I put that wealth; and cannot behold, unmoved, hundreds, nay thousands, perhaps, squandered at the gaming-table, and in frivolous expenses, which might have been employed in the encouragement of virtuous industry and the arts, or in succoring indigent merit; and, oh, Louisa! how could I

bear to reflect, that this thoughtless offender was the beloved wife of my heart !”

Louisa wept, promised amendment, and, on pretence of indisposition, passed the day in her dressing-room, pondering over, and shuddering at, her past transgressions ; and firmly resolving to act in future so as to regain her husband’s esteem.

In the evening, Lord Henry brought her money to discharge all the bills which he had seen, and asked her whether there were not others also to discharge. This question disconcerted her ; and, with a degree of infatuation which persons in debt often have when asked that question, even by those the most willing to relieve them from all their embarrassments, she answered in a confused and hurried manner, that she believed she had still a few trifling debts, but that they were of no consequence.

True it was that she meant to be economical, and pay them by instalments ; but, still, nothing could excuse her disingenuousness at such a moment, as her remaining debts amounted, at least, to two or three hundred pounds. Alas ! she had wandered far in the path of error ; and it is difficult indeed to recover the right way, even when it is kindly pointed out to us.

Lord Henry saw her embarrassment, and dared not inquire too minutely into the cause of it ; but he felt that his confidence in her was destroyed, too probably for ever ; and the only idea that at all consoled him was, as before, “ she is so *very* young !”

The next week, there was to be a large assembly at her house ; but some of the company had been invited by Louisa to stay supper, and renew afterwards the play of the evening.

This *last* part of the engagement Louisa now wished to break through ; but Lord Henry thought it was better that it should take place. “ It is only for once,” said he, “ and retracting such an invitation would perhaps expose you and me to unpleasant animadversions. No, let them stay ; and, should they press it, I would even

wish you to play with them ; but, after that evening, I beg that you will associate as little with that set as possible."

The party assembled ; the invited few stayed supper ; played ; Louisa played with them ; and, contrary to her usual custom, she won a considerable sum, and chiefly from Trelawney. It would have been safer for her to have lost. Lord Henry sighed, prophetically, when he saw her success ; but Louisa secretly congratulated herself on it, as she found that her winnings would go very far towards paying the debts which she had not dared to own to her husband.

Another month elapsed ; and Louisa, having withstood all temptations to high play, and expense of any kind, began to feel in some degree reconciled to herself, and to hope that Lord Henry beheld her with some of his usual complacency ; but she could not hide from her conscious heart, that his manner was changed ; that he viewed her often with a look of distrust and sorrow ; and that, in their hours of retirement, he no longer talked to her on the important subjects which, as a public character, engrossed his mind, in a manner calculated, as his manner used to be, to convince her that he considered her as nearly his equal in the scale of creation ; she had proved herself a *very woman* ; and from having been the object of his highest admiration and esteem, nay, almost of his veneration, she had sunk herself into an object of pity, distrust, and reprehension. True, the faults which had occasioned this were past ; but they could not be forgotten, though forgiven ; and while she felt Lord Henry's tenderness for her to be as ardent perhaps as ever, she could scarcely help exclaiming, " Oh ! restore me, if possible, that respect and esteem which gave such value to your tenderness, and which I knew not how to prize sufficiently till I found that I had lost them."

During all this time Trelawney was an attentive observer of Louisa's conduct and countenance ; and having learnt from her servant all that she knew on the subject of her late distress, he was convinced, that

could she be led into a *second* error, the dread of being again exposed to the angry contempt of her husband would induce her, perhaps, to consent to any terms, in order to conceal her failings from him. Besides, he was now so highly esteemed by her, and her pride was so soothed by observing in his manner that respect and esteem which, from Lord Henry, she was so painfully conscious of having forfeited, that her attention to Trelawney was so marked, and the softness of her address to him so encouraging, that, without being immoderately vain, he might imagine, that, could he once force her by any contrivance to be his, the object whom necessity had at first led her to favor, might soon become that of her choice.

At length, an opportunity, a fatal opportunity, offered of putting his plans in execution, and when Louisa was in a frame of mind, too, which did not promise to be very favorable to his purpose; for, as she happened to enter the drawing-room unobserved by her husband, who was conversing with a gentleman, she overheard him say, "So, Lady D—— is at last dead, is she? So much the better; for she had long outlived the respect and esteem of her husband; and in that case a woman had better be in her grave." "I think so too," replied his friend; and these words were scarcely uttered, when Lord Henry turned round, and beheld his wife leaning against the door, with an expression of sadness on her countenance for which he well knew how to account.

In an instant his face was covered with a conscious and almost repentant blush; and tenderly taking her hand, he told her she looked fatigued, and led her to a chair; then, turning to his companion, he took care by engaging him in conversation, to withdraw his attention from Louisa.

It was well that he did so; for her husband's words had sunk deep into her heart. "Ah! were I to die *now*," she thought, "conscious as he is that I have forfeited his esteem, he might regret me for his sake awhile, but not for my own!" and unable any longer to con-

ceal her emotion, she took the first opportunity of leaving the room.

In a short time Lord Henry followed her; and by the increased kindness of his manner she saw that he comprehended the exact state of her feelings; nor could she see it without a painful conviction at the same time, that he was endeavoring to satisfy her heart and his own for the consciousness he felt of her being sunk in his esteem, by every possible demonstration of yet surviving affection; and, humbled to the very soul, she had scarcely resolution to answer his inquiries concerning the manner in which the rest of her day was to be disposed of.

"I dine tête-à-tête with Lady M——," she faintly answered.

"And I," answered he, "dine at the Prince of Wales' coffee-house, and shall go thence to the house, where, if the expected motion come on, I shall stay all night; but, before I go, let me give you these bills," he added; "I heard you express a wish that you could assist your poor friend Sanford with money to purchase an ensigncy for his son; here are three hundred pounds for that purpose; give them to him, and tell him, that when his son is a general you expect to be repaid."

Louisa did not even attempt to articulate a single thank; but, throwing herself into her husband's arms, she relieved her oppressed heart by sobbing on his bosom; he then went to his appointment, and Louisa retired to dress for hers.

Lady M——, the friend with whom she was going to dine, had been, though she knew it not, the *chère amie* of Trelawney, and was still a convenient agent for him. she had engaged Louisa to dine tête-à-tête with her, in order that Trelawney might call in by accident after dinner, and that then she might pretend to be called away, and leave them alone together; and this scheme, concerted between Lady M—— and Trelawney, was not at all difficult of execution.

Louisa kept her appointment, and dined with her false friend. While they were drinking coffee in the

boudior, Trelawney came in; and on Lady M——'s expressing her surprise at seeing him, he told her that he had long threatened to come and take his revenge of her at piquet, and that now the moment was arrived.

"So much the better," replied Lady M——, "as our friend Lady Henry is here to see fair play."

"But it will not be very amusing to our fair friend to be only a looker-on," observed Trelawney.

"Indeed you are mistaken," hastily answered Louisa; "I have abjured play myself, but I can still be interested in seeing others engaged in it; besides, I am too stupid either to entertain or be entertained this evening, and shall therefore gladly sink into a mere witness of other people's enjoyment."

While Louisa said this, Trelawney fixed his eyes on her face, and with an expression so ardent, that, for the first time, she suspected that he entertained for her sentiments warmer than those of friendship; and when she observed that he sighed frequently, did not attend to his game, but played, as Lady M—— remarked, "even worse than ever," so that it was no pleasure to her to win every game—which she did not fail to do, Louisa could not help looking on herself as in some measure the cause of his inattention.

He was, too, singularly eager to drink repeated glasses of the *chasse chaffé* which stood near him; and so much did he extol its efficacy in raising the spirits, that Louisa, feeling herself unusually depressed, contrary to her usual custom, was prevailed upon to drink two glasses of *liqueur*.

After Lady M—— had played several games, and won all, Trelawney declaring himself the worst player in the world, she was called out of the room, but returned immediately in well-acted distress, to say that her steward was come up from her estate in the country to talk to her on business, and she must leave Lady Henry for an hour at least; but she hoped she would stay, and allow Mr Trelawney the honor of entertaining her till she returned.

Louisa begged to go away directly, but Lady M—— would not hear of it; besides, she had not ordered her carriage till eleven o'clock, and Lady M—— declared that it was not in her power to send her home in hers; she was therefore left alone with Trelawney; and, for the first time in her life she *felt* that she was alone with him.

Trelawney himself allowed his countenance to express the love which he had at first willed himself to feel for this charming woman, but which now he could not have helped feeling if he would; and while Louisa averted her conscious face from his gaze, she felt the silence, in which they both sat, grow every moment more embarrassing; she now took up the cards, and endeavored to rally Trelawney on his want of skill at the game of piquet.

"I never played well," replied he, sighing; "and to night it was impossible for me to attend. Can you play?"

"Yes; and tolerably well, too; but I have forsworn cards."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Trelawney; "*Apropos*—I never told you of it before, but I confess that I have accused you in my heart of *meanness*."

"Me! of meanness!"

"Yes; you won a large sum of money of me at your own house, and have always refused to give me a chance of winning it back again, on the stale pretence of having given over playing at cards."

"It was *not* a pretence—it was a *fact*," returned Louisa, blushing indignantly at the charge.

"But it was a well-timed fact," replied Trelawney with a sneer; "however, I rejoice in that symptom of avarice in you; for, when I could gaze on a woman till my very senses ache with the idea of her perfections, 't is a relief to me to know that she has at least one fault; and this fault, sorry am I to say, I have heard lately even your friends attribute to you; to others I would not own you guilty; but, to myself, I could not deny that you had recently exhibited strong symptoms

of loving money more than such a woman ought to do ; for instance, you left off play when you were a winner of several hundreds, and for the last six weeks you have partaken of several fine entertainments, without having given any in return."

"Mr Trelawney !" cried Louisa, starting from her seat, trembling with indignation, for she knew her virtues were the motives that had been so vilely traduced. But to justify herself from this charge, by owning the truth, was impossible ; and she reseated herself, coldly assuring him that he was welcome to attribute her conduct to any motives he pleased.

"Nay, nay, I did not mean to *offend* you," cried Trelawney, grasping her hand and gazing passionately in her face, "but I love to abuse you—I dare not praise you—for—would to God I had never seen you !" he muttered between his teeth, and, throwing her hand from him, paced the room in violent agitation.

"Mr Trelawney," said Louisa coldly, "we had better, I believe, sit down to piquet."

"*C'est la ou je Pattendois*," said Trelawney to himself, and to cards they went.

"What shall we play for?" asked Trelawney carelessly.

"The lower the better," replied Louisa ; "I only want to play *pour passer le tems*."

"Oh ! as you please, ma'am," replied Trelawney with an air of pique ; "you are resolved, I see, that I shall not win my hundreds back again !"

"Remember, sir," returned Louisa, "that I know myself to be much the better player ; therefore I need not care what the stake is."

"Nor will I care ; therefore, as it is at my peril and not yours, I must beg to play high"—naming a very considerable stake.

Louisa hesitated. True, at her own house the last night on which she had played, she had played with her husband's consent, and in his presence, at a rate as high as that which Trelawney named ; however, she

could not bear to be accused of meanness and avarice, though erroneously ; and at last she consented to play for the sum which he mentioned, depending on Lady M——'s return to break up their party, and also on her own skill to preserve her from any bad losses.

Alas ! she knew not that Trelawney possessed a secret, of which though he would have scorned to make use while playing with a man, and for the sake of gain only, he had no scruple of availing himself in order to give himself a chance of possessing the woman whom he loved ; this secret was the art, taught him by a German juggler, of dealing himself any hand of cards which he pleased.

At first, the unsuspecting Louisa was allowed to win game after game, till the avarice of a gamester was indeed awakened in her, as she contemplated her increasing gains. But at that moment, by a trick of Trelawney's art, and when he, in seeming despair, had doubled his bets and his stakes, she lost all she had won and something more, and, rising up, declared she would play no longer.

"I thought you did not mind losing," cried Trelawney maliciously.

"Nor do I," replied Louisa, blushing, scarcely knowing what she did, and sitting down again. Trelawney drank a glass of *liqueur* ; "You had better do the same," cried he ; and Louisa, conscious of increasing agitation, followed his advice. The usual glass he had changed for a full sized one, and Louisa unconsciously drank it. The consequence soon was, that, as she continued to play, her head grew more confused, and her feelings more irritable.

She continued to lose ; and in proportion as she did so, she went on betting still higher. At length she found she had lost above a hundred pounds, and had no cash to discharge the debt, unless she made free with the money given her by her generous husband for the assistance of a distressed friend. However, it was too late to stop. Her only chance of redeeming herself was by going on. She did, and won one game.

Trelawney was then to deal. Eager to see her cards, Louisa took up the first six before the rest were dealt. It was a *sixième*—Trelawney knew it. "Now," said he, "Lady Henry, let it be double or quits." Louisa consented to the proposal, and Trelawney, having packed the cards, gave himself point, quint, and quatorze! and his unhappy victim had incurred a debt of near three hundred pounds to him!

The agony of that moment completely dispersed the confusion which the *liqueur* had contributed to occasion in her mind. But the extent of her danger and distress had not yet burst upon her. Trelawney saw her anguish, and artfully pretended to attribute it to fear of her husband and of his resentment.

"Fear!" she exclaimed, "fear of his resentment! Oh! that feeling were heaven to what I this moment experience. No; 't is the bitter consciousness that I deserve to lose, and shall lose his esteem, that hurries me to madness; that I shall appear to the man I dote upon, and to the most perfect of beings, as a creature worthy of nothing but his contempt. Oh! if you knew that man as I know him! if you knew all that he has done for me! 'T was but this morning that—" Here, unable to proceed, she threw herself on the sofa, and groaned aloud.

"But why, my dearest Lady Henry, why should you expose yourself to your husband's contempt? Why need he know what has passed?"

"He must know it. Am not I in your debt, sir, and without the means of paying you, unless assisted by him?"

"Then, could you pay me without his knowledge, you would be easy?"

"Easy! Yes; as far as the reproaches of my conscience will let me be. Easy! Yes; could I but preserve some little share of his esteem, I should be comparatively happy—but that is impossible."

"Dearest of women, it is not impossible. The means are in your power," cried Trelawney, falling at her feet, and daring to make known to her the conditions of her

security from her husband's resentment. But words would fail to give an adequate idea of the mute horror and surprise with which Louisa listened to his insulting and profligate proposal ; and read in it the degrading idea which her weakness in one respect had led him to form of her in all. She spoke not, she stirred not ; and but for the meaning contempt and indignation expressed in her countenance, Trelawney might have doubted whether she really existed. At length, roused to exertion by the continuance of his presumptuous declarations, she rose from her seat, and, clasping her hands together, exclaimed, "Just heaven, well am I punished for my errors, by an insult like this !"

She then took from her pocket-book the notes which Lord Henry had given her in the morning, and presented them to the astonished and disconcerted Trelawney. "Take them, sir," she cried with the quickness of a desperate but determined mind ; "they were destined to a different purpose, but I will not remain in your debt a moment ; you shall give me the change when we meet again. And now," looking at her watch, "I shall ring for my carriage."

In vain Trelawney knelt and expostulated. Louisa made no other reply, than that, as she found the bell did not ring, he would oblige her by calling her servants.

"It is not eleven, and they can't be come."

"It is past eleven, and they are always punctual."

"You must not, shall not go yet ; I will not call your carriage."

"Then I will call it myself," she exclaimed ; and before he could detain her she had reached the bottom of the stairs, and seeing her servant, in another moment she was seated in her chariot, and drove from the door.

"Home ?" cried the footman. "Home !" repeated Louisa to herself, "Home ! Not yet !" and letting down the glass, she desired to be driven to the house of her apothecary.

When the carriage stopped at the door, and the servant came to receive her orders, the lamp glared on her

face, and he started at the sight of her pale cheek and disordered eye. "My lady," cried the man, "are you not well, my lady?"

"No; such a tooth-ache! Call Mr Unwin immediately."

He came, bowing too low to notice the pale countenance of Louisa.

"Mr Unwin," cried she, "I am returning home distracted with the tooth-ache; for pity's sake, give me some laudanum directly!"

"A small bottleful, my lady?"

"Yes, a small quantity. But now I think of it, Mr Unwin, I shall want to take some into the country with me; so let me have a large bottleful at once."

"Very well, my lady, I will."

He procured the laudanum, and gave it into the servant's hand; but though the lamp still glared on her face, he saw not the sad and desperate expression of her countenance; he saw not her parched and quivering lip; and he heard not the deep, faltering, and unusual sound of her voice. To him, she had only the tooth-ache; she said so, and he was satisfied.

How many people *look* without seeing! Louisa in a few minutes reached home; when there, she summoned her maid to her dressing-room, and told her "that she herself should sit up till Lord Henry returned, however late he might be;" but desired her to go to bed.

The servant affectionately replied, "I am sure, my lady, you are not well; therefore I beg that you will go to bed, and let me sit up." But Louisa, who was with difficulty able to keep her feelings in any bounds, in a loud tone of voice, and with a sternness wholly unusual to her, commanded her "to cease her impertinence, and begone!"

The astonished servant, with tears in her eyes, obeyed. Louisa looked after her as the door closed, and exclaimed, "Poor thing! I have hurt her feelings; but she will forgive me tomorrow."

She was now left alone with her own thoughts, and they were nought but wretchedness and despair—and the

means of instant death were in her power. True, she felt that at nineteen it was hard, very hard to die ; but all that made life valuable was gone from her for ever. She knew that she had now for ever forfeited the esteem and love of her husband ; and had not Lord Henry himself pronounced her doom ? had he not said that morning, "that it was better for a woman to die, than survive the esteem of her husband ?"

Louisa was not conscious of it ; but the bitterness with which she dwelt on this observation, and the conscious blush which crimsoned the face of Lord Henry when he saw how Louisa applied it, added a motive of resentment to other reasons urging her to suicide. To be regretted by him, to be the object of his agonized admiration, for having energy enough to punish herself for the vices which long habits of self-indulgence, rather than vicious propensities, had caused her to commit, was a prospect so dear to her, that, to realize it, life itself was not too great a sacrifice. She little knew the strong and discriminating mind of her husband ; she little knew how weak in his eyes that being must appear, who imagined that one great fault could be varnished over, or atoned for by the commission of a still greater—and one which admits of no repentance or reparation ; she was not aware that suicide appeared to him no better than rank selfishness, and indolent cowardice.

But she had erred, and she could not bear to encounter the dreadful consequences of her error. The ardent attachment to her husband, which ought to have deterred her from evil, now only wakened in all its force, to show her the height from which she had fallen, and that her only alternative, in the very prime of youth, was misery or death ! She had never learnt to bear even the pain of trifling privations and self-denials as expiations for offences ; and the same impatience of suffering, that had always hurried her into indulging every wish as it rose, now urged her to the commission of self-murder !

Sometimes, indeed, the thought of her father, and of his childless age, came across her mind, and unnerved

her resolution ; but then she recollected that he loved her so tenderly, that he would rather follow her to her grave than behold her languishing in mental affliction ; and again with a firm hand she grasped the benumbing draught, placed it beside her, and sat down to write a farewell letter to her husband, and a few lines to Trelawney.

To the latter she wrote thus :

“ You knew me to be weak, and you basely took advantage of my weakness ; and your friend Lady M—— entered only too successfully into your plans. I understand it all now ; but, despicable contrivers as you are, you failed in your worst and ultimate purpose. No ; though you could lure me to the vice of play, and convert into an impoverished gamester the wife of one of the noblest of men, neither your artifices nor my fears could tempt me to purchase concealment and security from my husband’s anger, by the surrender of my honor to your licentious passion. Monster ! I could trample on you, for having indulged the hope even for an instant. What ! am I not already too unworthy of such a husband ?

“ You wonder, probably, why I condescend to write to you at all—and why I write thus. Know, then, that while I write, the means of self-destruction are in my reach ; and you, by the error into which you and your vile agent betrayed me this evening, by luring me to the card-table, have precipitated me into an untimely grave. I cannot live, and be the object of my husband’s contempt and aversion ; my soul dotes on him too fondly. Listen, then, to the words of a dying woman ! Man of intrigue and passion, repent of thy iniquity ; I am one of thy victims ; beware how thou seekest after others. Let the remembrance of me fill thee with salutary remorse ! Out of pity to thee, and love for my husband, I will not urge him to revenge by disclosing thy treachery to him ; but that my last moments may be marked by an act of mercy, the knowledge of thy crime shall die with me, and thou shalt live to think of my untimely fate, and for repentance and amendment.

“ Farewell ! I forgive thee,

“ LOUISA ALGERNON.”

This note she directed to Trelawney, and then enclosed in an envelope to her own servant, desiring her to give it to Mr Trelawney.

The letter to Lord Henry was as follows :

"When you read this, best beloved of my soul, I shall be insensible to the expressions of regret and pity which it will probably occasion you ; and, alas ! pity my selfishness while I own that I could better endure the consciousness of your suffering the pangs of unavailing regret, than bear to live and be the object of your contempt and indifference. I have sinned past forgiveness. The money which you gave me to perform an act of generosity, I lost this evening at the gaming table ! I could not bear to *live*, and make this degrading confession ! and did you not yourself say, that a woman had better die than survive the esteem of her husband ?

"I have only one request to make to you :—Continue to be a son to my poor father ; desert not his childless age, as I have been forced to do ; and never, never let him know, or even suspect, how I died, or the cause of my death. But I must fly from this subject. O God ! with such a husband—the delight of his friends, the pride of his country—how happy I might have been ! While I am writing this, an applauding senate perhaps is hanging on thy words, and listening delighted to that voice which I shall never hear again ! And what a welcome, what a recompense, must await thee at home ! A wife writhing under the consciousness of disgrace and error, or stretched before thee a self-murdered corpse ! I cannot hesitate on which of these two horrors to make my choice. I could not endure to encounter the contemptuous glance of thine eye ; therefore, farewell forever ! O that I could once more hold thee to my heart ! But I am unworthy of such a blessing. Be this, then, my only farewell ! I fly from thy justice to the mercy of my God.

"LOUISA."

Having closed this letter, having written her husband's name on it, gazed on his name for the last time, and pressed it to her pale and parched lip, she breathed an

audible prayer to the Being into whose presence she was madly and impiously rushing, begging him to forgive her, to bless her husband and her father—and then, with the quickness of desperate resolution, she put the fatal draught to her lips.

At this moment her hand was suddenly seized, and the poison dashed on the ground. She turned and beheld her husband ! and, shrinking from his awful frown, sunk on the ground in a state of insensibility.

Though the unobservant being from whom Louisa had procured the laudanum had not beheld her as an object of anxious curiosity, when with a disordered mein and faltering voice she stopped to request it of him, there was an eye at that moment which read her looks with terror and suspicion ; there was a heart that had throbbled with apprehensive agony at the hollow sound of her voice, and whose prophetic fears had whispered the means of saving her from the meditated destruction.

Lord Henry, finding that the expected motion at the house would not come on that night, was returning home, when he saw his own carriage at Mr Unwin's door ; and alarmed lest Louisa should be suddenly taken ill, he approached the door, muffled up in his great coat, and unperceived even by his servants, just as the lamp disclosed her pale and mournful face to the view, and as with a faltering voice, and with that motion of the lips which shows them to be parched and painful, she asked for laudanum on pretence of having the tooth-ache, and, with an expression which struck terror to his heart, desired that the bottle should be a large one.

He was too deeply read in her countenance not to know that something dreadful had happened to her ; and he was now too well aware of the impetuous violence of her feelings, and of the want of deliberation of her character, not to fear that the dangerous drug was designed for a most fatal purpose ; and he was on the point of discovering himself, and accompanying her home, when it occurred to him that he had better reach home before her, desire his servant not to mention his return, and then

conceal himself in Louisa's dressing-room to watch her motions ; and, should his fears be just, rush out and save her from her own despair.

He had done so ; he had hidden himself behind a curtain in a deep recess opposite to her writing-table ; and, through an aperture in it which he had purposely made, he could behold all her actions, and see all her agony and irresolution ; nor could her agony have exceeded his own, while he awaited the final event ; at length, her despair reached its climax ; he rushed out, and overcome with a variety of dreadful emotions, his guilty and unhappy wife lost in temporary death the consciousness of her delinquency.

Lord Henry raised her from the ground, and laid her on a couch, scarcely knowing what he did, or how he ought to act. Sometimes he feared that his senses had deceived him, that he had come too late, and she was really dead ; then he hung over her in frenzied distress ; and, calling her by a thousand endearing names, clasped her in agony to his bosom. But at length he saw her bosom heave convulsively ; and while unwonted tears burst down his manly cheeks, her recollection seemed on the point of returning, and he used every proper means to restore her entirely to life.

At last, when her senses were nearly restored, he, for one moment more, suffered the man and the husband to supersede the reprovcr and the judge ; and, imprinting a long and fond kiss upon her lips, he strained her almost wildly to the heart which she had so deeply wounded ; then, struggling with his feelings, his countenance re-assumed its sad severity ; and when her opening eye met his, terrified at its stern reproving glance, she uttered a deep groan ; and, falling at his feet, besought his pity and his pardon, by her uplifted hands and imploring eyes.

"Kneel to thy God ! and not to me," replied Lord Henry ; " him have you most offended. Cowardly, yet daring woman ! who, rather than meet the anger of a creature frail as yourself, could dare to encounter that of

an omnipotent and impeccable Being ! Are you not *terrified* at the reflection, that, but for my unexpected interference, you might at this moment have been trembling in the presence of a judge, far, far more awful than I am ! Let me raise you from that posture ; mock him not with the attitude of humility, while your proud heart defies him !”

So saying, he forced her from the ground, and seated her on the sofa.

“ But what dreadful crime,” continued he, “ can you have committed, that should have made you so wretched and so desperate ? These no doubt will inform me,” he continued, taking up the letters.

“ Oh ! not that ! for mercy’s sake do not read that !” cried Louisa, trying to seize the letter enclosed for Trelawney.

Lord Henry, with a countenance terrible in anger, and withholding the letter, replied, “ This is no time for mystery and *reserve*, madam,” and instantly broke the seal ; the envelope fell to the ground ; and he saw the name of Trelawney on the address.

“ Merciful God !” cried Lord Henry, “ what new crime (as yet wholly unsuspected) have I still to learn !”

Louisa understood his suspicions ; and for a moment she triumphed in the consciousness of innocence.

With an eager eye and a beating heart he devoured the almost illegible scrawl. “ Villain ! villain !” he exclaimed when he had ended.

“ I feared this !” cried Louisa, clasping her hands in anguish.

“ Feared what ?” interrogated Lord Henry.

“ That you might revenge the intended injury to your honor by— ”

“ By meanly sacrificing to a sense of personal injury, my duty to my country and society ? No, madam, no ; I will not condescend to risk my life against that of a villain ; or, by depriving him of existence, be forced to shelter in a foreign land, and leave unfulfilled the active duties which I think it incumbent on me to fulfil in

this. No. You have made me miserable ; but not even you shall be the means of leading me to an action which would degrade me in my own eyes. I will set you a nobler example than you have given me ; I will not rush on desperate actions to escape from wretchedness, but I will summon resolution to bear my misery with fortitude."

"But your misery," cried Louisa, "is not self-incurred ; no remorse mixes with it ; and therefore it is comparatively easy to bear ; but mine was—"

"The consequence of your own want of conduct ; and to escape it, you dared to commit a crime still worse than the one for which you suffered. Rash, unthinking, selfish woman ! If no religious restraint withheld you, could you not be restrained by the dread of the anguish which you were about to inflict on your husband and your father ? But no—you felt for no one but yourself ; and selfishness is always the characteristic of suicide."

"This letter I perceive is addressed to me," he continued, and was going to read it instantly ; but his courage failed him, and he resolved to read it alone ; he therefore retired into the next room ; and Louisa, glad of a moment's solitude to compose her troubled thoughts, spent the time of his short absence in a fervent address to that Being whose forgiveness she needed, and whose mercy she had experienced.

When Lord Henry returned, she ventured to raise her eyes to his face ; and her heart felt one solitary throb of pleasure, when she saw the trace of a tear on his cheek.

The letter had indeed beguiled him of many, but he made no comment on it. It was, however, easy to observe, that he continued his just reproofs with visible effort, and that he steadily avoided looking at Louisa as he spoke.

"But we had better retire to rest now," he at length observed—"and you shall know my future will tomorrow."

"I cannot rest," exclaimed Louisa.

"Then PRAY," answered Lord Henry ; and taking a

candle, he immediately retired to a chamber at a distance from Louisa, and left her to commune with her own miserable thoughts in solitude and silence. Lord Henry too, bathed his solitary pillow with many a bitter tear ; but his resolution was taken.

The next morning he sent to invite himself to breakfast with Louisa in her dressing-room ; but his servant hastening back into his chamber, with looks of alarm informed him that Lady Henry was dangerously ill, and that her attendants begged him to come to her immediately.

Lord Henry ran directly to her apartment, and found that the account of her illness was not exaggerated ; and that the agonies of mind which she had endured the preceding evening, had had a fatal effect on her frame. He immediately despatched a messenger for medical advice, and then, as kindly as if she had never offended him, took his station by her bedside, and anxiously watched beside her. Not that he owed to himself that his motives for attending by his wife's sick bed were wholly attributable to anxious, unsubdued affection ; on the contrary, he labored to convince himself, that he acted thus from fear lest in her delirium she should disclose what had happened the night before, and that therefore it was proper no one but he should, if possible, approach her.

Nor was this precaution unnecessary ; during several days of delirium, scarcely a day passed in which Louisa did not allude to the horrors which had overwhelmed her health and reason ; and while she refused to take any thing but from the hand of her husband, she continually addressed to him the most pathetic prayers for pardon.

At length the fever subsided, and Louisa recovered, to feel as great reality of wretchedness as any which her delirious fancy had pictured. She recovered, to read in the cold *r  serve* of Lord Henry's manner, that a severe punishment for her faults awaited her ; to fear that she had indeed lost his affection forever, and that his attentions to her had been the result of duty only. She knew not that the hand which now coldly avoided the touch of hers, had,

while she was insensible of kindness, grasped her burning arm, and lingered on her rapid pulse with terrified and anxious fondness ; that the arm on which she now vainly endeavored to lean, had supported her in her unconscious frenzy, and clasped her with unabated tenderness ; and that the lip which now breathed nothing but cold inquiries after her health, had often kindly and fondly pressed her burning temples, and addressed to heaven the prayers of agonized and apprehensive affection.

But Lord Henry still persisted in his attendance on her ; and Lord N——, whom he had constantly kept out of her sight, assured every one that “there never was such a fond husband as Lord Henry ; that he would suffer no one to come near his wife but himself ; and that he was sure they were the fondest and happiest couple in Europe.”

In the meanwhile, Lord Henry, this *happy* husband, and Louisa, this *beloved* wife, were on the eve of forming arrangements for their future way of living ; which, though perfectly consistent with the former's ideas of justice, were fatal to every hope of happiness entertained by the latter.

As soon as Louisa was able to leave her own apartment, Lord Henry repeated his former request to be admitted to breakfast with her in her dressing-room ; and summoning all her resolution, she received the dreaded visit.

When the almost untasted meal was removed, Lord Henry addressed her thus : “Though the fear of injuring my peace has not been strong enough to prevent you from the commission of the most pernicious errors ; and therefore I must consider you as loving yourself far beyond any other human being ; still, I believe that you entertain for me sincere and unabated love ; and that it is not the dread of what the world may think of your conduct, but what I think of it, that agonizes your heart at this moment.”

“True, most true !” was her answer.

“But I feel,” resumed Lord Henry, “such respect

for the opinion of the world, and such fear of its just censure; not only of myself but of my wife, that I am anxious to hide from it every part of the late horrible transaction. Mr Trelawney and Lady M—— for their own sakes will be secret; and we for ours. Therefore, we will appear to every one to live as if our union were still cemented by the best of all ties, *mutual confidence and esteem*. In private only, conscious as we are of the *barrier* that exists between us, we will live as strangers to each other."

"As strangers!" exclaimed Louisa, starting from her seat.

"I have said it," he coldly replied.

"Oh! this is worse, far worse than dying!" she cried. "Cruel Algernon! why did you by your kind attentions endeavour to save my life?"

"That you might live for *repentance*," he answered.

"Yet, yet be *merciful* in your justice," returned Louisa. "Send me from you! I cannot, cannot bear to live under the same roof with you, yet find myself an alien to your affections!"

"What! were the world's censure a matter of indifference to you, could you bear to break your father's heart, by the knowledge of your wretchedness, and your fatal errors? If *you* are cruel enough to disregard the consciousness of his misery, *I* am not. Kind, good old man! I will not convert thy parental pride into shame and repining. No; as far as depends on me, thou shalt go down to thy grave glorying in thy daughter."

"My Lord," cried Louisa, "I am resigned to my fate; let me be the only sufferer."

"The only sufferer!" returned Lord Henry. "Oh! Louisa—" A long pause ensued. At length Lord Henry said, "I have well considered this unhappy business, and I am convinced that it will be proper for the world to think you still the object of my love and adoration."

"And do you mention the world's delusion as means of consolation to me?"

"No, madam, I do not wish you to be soon consoled ; I wish you to undergo salutary suffering for your faults, and to be amended by dint of trials. No ; I shall on principle be pleased to know, that while an admiring world looks up to you as its idol, the flattered idol abroad, is a wretch at home. The hour of unconditional pardon and pernicious indulgence is past. I cannot take to my bosom a wife so weak and criminal ; for your projected suicide, instead of raising you in my eyes, has sunk you still lower. As a christian I forgive you, but as a husband I disclaim you !—(Here his voice faltered.) I have one thing more to say—I demand a full and true account of all your debts ; and when they are paid, the allowance which I shall give you shall be so ample as to preclude all temptation to run in debt again ; at least, none but what habit, so often powerful over reason, shall hold out. I think, I am sure, you will never play again."

"Bless you, bless you for that !" cried Louisa, bursting into tears ; and Lord Henry hastily quitted the room.

In every thing Lord Henry's plan was punctually put in execution. As soon as he had paid all her bills, he gave her the first quarter's allowance of a most bountiful yearly stipend. He even paid her infinitely more attention in public than she ever received from him before ; while the deceived Lord N—— was often heard to exclaim with tears in his eyes, "Lord and Lady Henry are a pattern for married people !"

Luckily for him, he saw not the interior of their family ; he beheld them not in their hours of retirement ; he knew not that it was now so painful to them to be alone together, that Lord Henry was glad to invite a widowed sister to take up her abode with them.

Lady Anne came, and was not slow to discover the marked contrast between her brother's manner to his wife in public, and in private ; nor was it long before the affectionate earnestness of her inquiries drew from Louisa a confession, that her own imprudence had weaned from her the affections of her husband. "But, guilty

as I am," cried she, "I did not think he could so completely have thrown me from his heart."

"Oh, do not believe that he has done so, my dear sister ; you are now only undergoing a probation. When he thinks you have expiated your past errors by a life of self-denial and virtue, he will forgive you, and love you as tenderly as ever." "Alas!" replied Louisa, when I have gone through my probation, and even with honor to myself, it is but too probable that there will be no love remaining in his heart, to reward me for all I have endured. Nothing in this life is stationary—no, not even affection. If it does not increase, it must unavoidably diminish ; and never, never to relax in the coldness of his manner in private, proves, indeed it does, that his heart is for ever lost to me !"

The kind lady Anne could only weep, and pity her ; for she looked up to her brother as to a superior being, and could not blame any measure which he thought proper to pursue. But Louisa, whose feelings were wounded to the quick by the consciousness that Lord Henry loved her no longer, though well convinced that she had deserved to lose it, sometimes proudly resolved to hide within her heart the misery which she felt, and not allow him to suspect the anguish which she endured. But the next moment she declared that he should see her the hopeless wretch that he had made her, and the whole world should know her sufferings, and learn to pity while it condemned her. But then she recollected Lord Henry's desire, that what had passed might be kept secret from every one ; and with a desperate sort of resignation she vowed he should be obeyed. She therefore took care to be continually in company ; and observing that the agony of her mind had impaired the mantling bloom of her cheek, she repaired its ravages by art, and so skilfully, that Lord Henry, not suspecting the deception, and seeing his wife shining with unabated beauty, concluded that she felt but little ; and mourned in secret over her want of proper sensibility.

Thus, unfortunately, while only seeking to deceive the world, she also deceived her husband, and estranged his heart still further from her. But in this instance, Lord Henry, in wishing her to act a part before the eyes of the public, was as culpable as she was; and they added one more to the many instances that openness and sincerity are always more conducive to happiness than disguise and duplicity.

Sometimes overwhelmed and humbled by the consciousness of her husband's superiority, Louisa resolved carefully to examine whether that superiority was as her youthful enthusiasm had imagined it to be; and she endeavored, in the gay, and often accomplished group of young men who surrounded her, to find some counterbalance to the sense of his oppressive worth. And while they praised her talents, and paid respectful homage to her charms, she endeavored to look on her youth as an excuse for her errors, and to consider Lord Henry as a severe and merciless judge.

One evening, flattered and followed, she had succeeded in lulling her remorse to sleep, and had begun to believe that the homage of the admiring group around her was nearly as valuable as the esteem of her husband; and that a foolish partiality alone had made her believe in the exclusive excellence of Lord Henry; when Lord Henry himself entered. Instantly, as Delphine says, she saw "*les nuances de l'affectation sortir*." The lively appeared flippant; the relater of stories, a mere *twaddler* (to use a well known phrase;) the sententious observer, affected and pedantic; the pleasant satirist, an unprincipled defamer; and the man of wit, a conceited coxcomb.

There was an unpretending simplicity and good sense in Lord Henry Algernon; a dignified composure of manner, and a modesty not at all inconsistent with manliness; which was so sure a pledge, that though every sentence he uttered beamed with mind, he was wholly unconscious of shining, and meant not to shine, that Louisa hated herself for having even wished to degrade him to her own level; and retired to her chamber, when

the glittering crowd was gone, more miserable, more self-condemned, more provoked at, yet more in love with, and proud of her husband, than ever. "And this is the man whom I have presumed to afflict!" she cried; "this is the man from whom I have eternally separated myself!" The thought was agony, and the morning found her unrefreshed by sleep.

More than a year had now elapsed since Lousia's last conversation with her husband in her dressing-room. But though art could hide the decay of her bloom, it could not disguise the ravages which secret sorrow made in her form. That roundness of contour, which made her figure so beautiful, was now lost; and her fallen cheek proclaimed that some sure but secret cause was mining her health away.

Lord N—— was amongst the first to observe this, and he was fortunate enough to attribute this appearance to a very welcome cause. He had long wished to see an heir to his estates and Lord Henry's, and he now was convinced that this happy moment was approaching. Nor was it long before the delighted old man ventured to hint his feelings on the subject to Lord Henry himself.

"So, my Lord Henry!" cried he, leaning on the head of his cane, and looking very archly up in his face, "So! when family secrets can no longer be concealed, I suppose then I am to be made acquainted with them!"

"Secrets, my lord!" cried Lord Henry, starting from his chair—

"Yes, sir; and I do think it was very unkind in you to keep me in ignorance."

"My lord," exclaimed Lord Henry, "you alarm and distress me beyond measure. What is known? what ought I to have revealed to you?"

"What you must know it would give me the greatest pleasure to hear."

Lord Henry started, and went back to his seat.

"All is safe," he said to himself; "for what I have to tell, a father could not have pleasure to hear."

"Come, come, Henry, away with these reserves,"

continued Lord N——, “and let me congratulate you and myself on the happy prospect of an heir to both our families.”

Lord Henry again started from his seat—“This is too much,” he exclaimed—“Who has been sporting thus with your lordship’s credulity?”

Lord N—— looked aghast—“My credulity! Let me tell you, sir, no one should presume to sport with that.”

“I beg your pardon, my lord, but indeed you are misinformed.”

“I tell you I can’t be misinformed—for I have not been informed at all; my eyes were my informants—and so are other people’s.”

Lord Henry for a minute stood gazing on him with horror; but, recollecting himself, he said; “My lord, it is a mistake; it is not as you imagine.”

“Well, sir,” replied Lord N—— pettishly, “you shall have it as you please; but if Louisa is not in a family way, what is the reason of her ill looks? Answer me that.”

“Her ill looks! I did not know that she *did* look ill.”

“No! Why, she is a mere shadow, sir; and as she has no apparent indisposition, it is natural, you know, that one should attribute it to a certain and very desirable cause. But if you are sure of what you affirm, Henry, why, then, the Lord have mercy on my poor child, for she must be in a consumption!”

So saying, with his handkerchief at his eyes he left the room, leaving Lord Henry resolved to watch Louisa’s looks, and hoping to find that her father’s fears were as ill founded as his hopes had been.

But again Louisa met his eyes in the evening, as blooming and as animated as ever. True, she was thin, very thin; but dissipation and late hours might sufficiently account for that; and sighing over her want of stability of feeling, he continued to think that his domestic happiness was destroyed for ever.

In the mean while, Lord N—— was resolved to discover by all means in his power, how far his hopes were

really ill founded; and for this purpose he interrogated Rouisa's confidential servant.

"O dear, no, my lord—certainly not, my lord," was the answer.

"So, all positive people in this house, I find; but then if this be not the case, why does your lady look so ill?"

"My poor dear lady! Oh, my lord, I assure you I don't wonder at my lady's ill looks at all, for indeed she never gets a wink of sleep without laudanum. She walks about her room, sometimes all the night long—and so she has done many months."

Lord N—— was stupified with surprise. "And what does her husband mean by suffering it? Why does he not forbid it? A fine fancy, indeed!"

"Dear me, sir, my lord does not *know* it."

"No! He must sleep astonishingly sound then."

"Oh, dear me, my lord! my lord sleeps at one end of the house, and my lady at the other."

"So, so!" muttered Lord N——, after a pause of indignant and perturbed astonishment. "But I will know the meaning of this before I sleep," he exclaimed; and went in search of Lord Henry.

On meeting with him, "I have seen my daughter's woman, Lord Henry, since we last conversed," said Lord N——, "and I have heard strange things; but whatever be the cause of the separation between you and Louisa, I trust that her infidelity is not the cause of it!"

Lord Henry did not answer; he only bowed his head in assent.

"Sir, if I thought it *was*," cried the old man, "she should answer for her crime to *me*, sir. I would, yes, sir, I would forget, if possible, that she was my only child, my only joy on earth, sir! Yes, sir, I have a Roman spirit, sir!" Here he burst into tears; and Lord Henry, much moved, solemnly assured him that he believed his wife's honor to be without spot or blemish.

"Thank you, sir, thank you!" replied Lord N——; "but I knew it could not be otherwise. But then, wherefore is it that you never meet but in public?"

Lord Henry did not answer.

"My Lord Henry Algernon, you seem one of the most moral of men; yet there are hypocrites in the world, and I am almost tempted to believe that you are one. It is very strange, very strange, upon my soul!"

Still Lord Henry was silent.

"Your fair-seeming men," continued Lord N——, "are sometimes very ill acting ones, I know, and——"

Lord Henry now prepared to leave the room.

"Stop, stop, sir!"—angrily!—"one question once for all:—Do you, do you—have you another attachment, sir?"

"No, sir," coldly replied Lord Henry, and left him.

Lord N——, greatly enraged, vowed not to rest till he brought Louisa to a confession, however; and on going to her apartment he found her alone.

On seeing him, she affected great gaiety, and begged him to be seated; but when he entered, (he had heard her singing in an under and broken voice, a very mournful air, and to words expressive of regret for past happiness.)

"It will not do—it will not do, Lady Henry," said Lord N—— mournfully: "these skipping spirits can no longer impose on me—they are not natural—nor more, I protest, now I look at it, is your fine color! Oh, Louisa! I see it, I see it very clearly, you are dying of a broken heart!"

Here tears choked him; and Louisa, throwing herself on his neck, and joining her tears to his, declared she was quite well, and that his suspicions were wholly unfounded.

"It will not do—I am not to be imposed on so—Your husband——"

"Is one of the best of men."

"And of husbands, I suppose?"

"Yes, of husbands."

"And you, therefore, are the happiest of wives?"

To this home question Louisa could not answer; but her lip quivering, and her eyes filling with tears, she turned to the window, unable to speak.

"Seek not to deceive me, my dear child," continued Lord N——; "I know the terms on which you live with your husband, and therefore, I know, that though you both keep a fair appearance to the world, something dreadful must have passed between you. Have you not quarrelled?"

"No."

"No?—Perhaps some foolish difference of opinion, not conducted with temper, brought on irritating language, and neither of you has, as yet, chosen to make concessions? Perhaps you ventured to disagree with your husband on politics; and you know, child, he is very tenacious of his opinion on those subjects."

"Indeed, my dear father, I should never have thought of disputing with Lord Henry on any subject, much less on one on which he must be so much better informed than myself."

"Then what is the cause of your disunion? Answer me that."

"I cannot."

"Are you jealous? Do you suspect your husband of an attachment to any other woman?"

"Oh, no, no."

"Do you think he has ceased to love you?"

"I fear he has."

"Indeed! listen to me, my child. I see very clearly that, whatever be the cause, you are not happy; and that your life may be the sacrifice of this strange and mysterious grief. Lord Henry is as mysterious as you are. But mark me—if he cannot or will not make you happy, why, I *must*; and I shall insist on a perfect reconciliation taking place between you, or that you return to your father. On this I am determined, and I leave you to meditate on what I have said."

"Then there is but one thing to be done," said Louisa to herself: "I must ask Lord Henry's leave to declare my culpability to my father, as I cannot bear to see my husband for one moment an object of suspicion or anger to him. No; let me only be blamed, since I alone am guilty."

She then, before she entered her carriage, which was to convey her to an assembly, wrote the following note :—

“I conjure you to allow me to disclose our sad secret to my father ; justice demands it of me. I can bear his anger, however violent, better than the consciousness that he blames you, though I alone am guilty.”

Lord Henry read this note as he was dressing for the same party to which Louisa was already gone ; and he read it again and again ; it was the first instance of confidential intercourse that they had had since their separation. “There is some feeling in this request,” said he to himself ; “but then her feelings so soon evaporate !” and with a deep sigh, he carefully put the note in his pocket-book, and went to the party.

It was both crowded and brilliant ; but Lord Henry’s eyes looked only for Louisa. He wished to see on her countenance traits of that sensibility which dictated her note. He saw her as blooming and animated as ever. “Ah ! I see her character will never improve—there is no chance for our ever being happy again !” sighed Lord Henry ; though he could not help owning that she was very thin indeed.

At this moment Lord Henry observed an elderly gentleman, of a very intelligent countenance, contemplating Louisa with a great deal of interest, and he felt a desire of knowing what he dared not ask to know ; namely, what, physiognomically, he thought of her face ; when, to his great satisfaction, the gentleman addressed him, and said, “You, sir, I perceive, like myself, have been looking for some time at that very beautiful and interesting woman.”

“I have, sir ; it is a countenance to dwell upon—is it not ?”

“It is, indeed, sir,” replied the gentleman, “but with very painful interest.”

“Sir !” cried Lord Henry—

“What, sir !” replied the other, “do you not see that her gaiety is all assumed ; and that under those smiles, and that bustling vivacity, she hides an aching heart ?”

"You are a very acute examiner, I see, sir," replied Lord Henry with some degree of pique. "I see no such thing."

"No!"

"No, sir; a woman pining in secret would not have such a bloom as that."

"Bloom as that! Such a bloom is to be bought anywhere, believe me."

"Sir, let me assure you, Lady Henry Algernon's color is perfectly natural. I know it, sir—be assured I do."

"Well, sir, I shall not dispute the matter, especially as you may be a friend or relation of the lady's; but if that bloom be not art, I fear it is the blush of consumption."

Lord Henry started and turned pale; but the stranger, not regarding it, went on thus, "I confess I never felt so deep an interest in any one whom I do not know, as I do in that lady; because it was but yesterday that I heard an anecdote of her which does honor to her heart; and, sir, if you know her, it will give you pleasure to hear it too."

"I am all attention, sir," replied Lord Henry.

"A friend of mine, Mr Sandford, a man reduced from opulence to comparative poverty, has been for some time desirous of purchasing a commission for his son, but has not been able to raise the money; but about three months ago, Lady Henry Algernon, who has long known him, sent him three hundred pounds towards it, to be repaid when his son is a general. But what pleases me more than the gift itself, is, that she sent it in the name of her husband, and gave him the whole credit of the action, when it is very certain that he has no acquaintance with Mr Sandford; and besides, Lady Henry is known to be very capable of concealing her bounties under the name of another."

Lord Henry, during this recital, felt a glow of pleasure at his heart which he had not experienced for months; but it was not unalloyed. Ample as was his

allowance to his wife, he feared that, in order to give away the three hundred pounds, which, as a punishment for her fault, he had purposely omitted to send, (according to his original intention,) she had incurred debts to that amount; and therefore, he dared not give way to the feelings of approbation and affection, which spite of himself, forced the tears into his eyes, and for a moment made him incapable of replying to the stranger's observation.

When he had concluded his story—"Now, sir," said the stranger, "does not such a woman deserve to be happy?"

"Yes, sir; and happy she will be, if she be not so already," replied Lord Henry; "but let me assure you, that to my certain knowledge Lord Henry knew nothing of this gift to Mr Sandford."

"He is," resumed the stranger, "one of the first of men; and it is strange his wife should not be the happiest of women."

"I doubt you over-value him, sir," replied Lord Henry, sighing; "he has many faults, and—"

"My Lord!" said the stranger, politely bowing, "my suspicions are now confirmed; I am convinced that I have the honor of talking to Lord Henry Algernon himself; for no one else could have accused him of error." Then, begging Lord Henry to pardon the freedom of his remarks on Louisa, he bowed and disappeared.

Immediately after, eager to have his suspicions removed, Lord Henry followed Louisa into an adjoining apartment whither he saw her retire.

"Lady Henry," cried he, in a voice less assured than he wished it to be, allow me to speak a few words to you; our opportunities for talking, and on business, are so few, that I must seize them whenever they offer."

"My time," replied Louisa coldly, "is always at your lordship's disposal."

"I wish to ask, Lady Henry, whether—whether you are in want of money? as, if you are, I beg you to draw on me for whatever sum you choose."

Your generosity to me, sir," answered Louisa, "is so great, that your present offer seems to me almost like a reproach. It is therefore with great pleasure that I assure you, I have nearly a quarter's allowance untouched, and have not a single debt in the world."

Had she ended here, all would have been well; but feeling herself on the point of bursting into tears as she uttered the word debt, she assumed a gay unconcern of manner, and added—"No; instead of wanting money of you, I am sufficiently *en fonds* to be able to lend money to you."

"Pshaw!" muttered Lord Henry. She was wrong; on such a subject as this, levity was for ever forbidden her; but at this moment it was unpropitious indeed; and her disappointed husband was on the point of turning away from her, when he recollected the stranger's remark, and feared that her life was in danger. That idea banished all resentment; and hearing her carriage announced, "Shall I have the honor of leading you to your coach?" said he. Louisa thrilled with joy, as he took her willing hand, and held it with rather an eager grasp; when a young man of ton, coming hastily up, rallied her on the vulgarity of allowing her husband to be her beau; and, forcing her hand from Lord Henry's, led her down stairs.

"Pshaw!" said Lord Henry a second time, but with less pain than the time before; and he retired to bed that night less unhappy than usual.

Louisa was indeed amended; she had nobly discharged her duty to him and herself in the affair of Sandford; and she had done it *secretly* too, and with no view to obtain his applause. She had also, no doubt, made personal sacrifices to save the money for that purpose; and she had assured him she had not a debt in the world!

Still, he was sure that, having learnt to stand in awe of him as a judge, she had ceased to love him as a husband; and he feared that she secretly sighed to be united to some younger man, who would have viewed

her foibles with more indulgence and sympathy; nay, he thought that he had been a very rigid judge, especially as *she was so very, very young*.

In these painful cogitations he passed the night; and rose in the morning so full of terror for Louisa's health, that he went in search of his sister immediately, in order to interrogate her concerning it.

He found Lady Anne alone; and his first question was, "Do you think Lady Henry in bad health?"

"I think her in a very bad way indeed," replied Lady Anne; "she neither eats nor sleeps, and is shrunk in a most alarming manner."

"Good God! is it really so? and what is the cause?"

"Oh, brother!" cried Lady Anne, bursting into tears, "you are the cause. She thinks she has entirely lost your affection, and she pines in secret sorrow."

"Secret, indeed!" cried Lord Henry, "for do I not see her in company the gayest of the gay?"

"All acting—and sometimes, indeed, her spirits are the effect of laudanum."

"Laudanum!" echoed Lord Henry, shuddering as certain recollections passed across his mind; but are you *sure* of this?"

"Quite sure; not that my sister ever *blames* your indifference to her; on the contrary, she only blames *herself*, and thinks your conduct just, though severe. But she loves you so tenderly—"

"Loves me! impossible! If so, why does she not let me see how bitterly she feels our separation?"

"That is easily answered. In private you scarcely ever see her, except in presence of Lord N——; and in public, by trying to conceal from every eye her sufferings and disgrace, she only acts in obedience to your commands."

"True, my dear consoling sister," cried Lord Henry, pressing her to his heart; "still, I cannot believe in the strength, or rather, in the durability of her feelings."

"You have been separated more than a twelve-month;

and during that time your wife has been, in *secret*, a prey to the most corroding anguish."

"Give me proofs of this; I have never seen her but the idol of the crowd, and with unimpaired bloom and gaiety."

"Bloom! Her cheek, when she is not made up for company to hide her real situation, is pale as death!"

"What do you tell me?"

"The truth. She is now, I dare say, just risen; go to her dressing-room, and you will see her as she is."

"I—I dare not. Yet, after so long a probation of her penitence, and such proofs of her amendment as I received last night—" (Here he related his conversation with the stranger.)

"Very well, sir," said Lady Anne; "please to recollect that she never expected you would know of the action which you so justly admire; therefore, it could have proceeded from virtue merely."

"True—true—dear sister."

"But defer, if you *please*, the moment of reconciliation till it is too late to *save* your *victim*—and till your forgiveness finds her on her death bed."

"Cruel Lady Anne!"

"Cruel, only to be *kind*, brother; I am *sure* you love your wife."

"Love her!—Yes; *I* too, have had *my* sleepless nights and anxious days; but I thought I was doing my duty."

"Do it now, then; go and see the ravages which sorrow has made."

"I dread the sight; but I will go." So saying, he rushed out of the room, and did not allow himself to stop till he reached the door of Louisa's dressing-room. It was half open, and she was sitting just as she had left her room; with her hair dishevelled, her cheek pale, her eyes sunk in her head, and her whole appearance bespeaking the anguish of her heart. Her breakfast, untouched, stood before her; and she whom Lord Henry saw the night before, gayest of the gay, and most bloom-

ing of the beautiful, he now beheld as she really was—a hopeless wretch in the very prime of life and expectation !

She held a picture in her hand, which he soon saw was a picture of himself; and she was so engrossed in contemplating it, that he approached her unobserved.

“ This, at least, looks kindly on me,” she said, kissing it as she spoke ; “ my errors have not changed *that*.”

Lord Henry, on hearing these words, felt assured that the supposed loss of his affection was indeed the cause of her sorrow ; and in his emotion he moved his hand to his eyes so rapidly that Louisa heard a noise, and said, without turning her head, “ Is it you, Ellis ? Take away my breakfast ; I can’t eat it.” Then, hastily concealing the picture in her bosom, she leaned her arm on the table, and sat (tears stealing down her cheeks) the image of silent wo.

After some minutes, thinking herself alone, she suddenly arose, and exclaimed, “ Yes, Algernon, this state of misery cannot last long ; and when I am in my grave, you shall know the deep sorrow and true penitence of my heart ; and that, at least, though I had madly forfeited my *right* to your tenderness, I could not endure the loss of it, and live !” As she said this, she turned round and beheld her husband ; and would have fallen, overcome with surprise and emotion, had he not caught her in his arms.

“ Lousia !” cried he, fondly clasping her faded form to his bosom, “ your probation and my misery are, from this moment over ; and let them, if possible, be forever forgotten !”

A few hours after, Lord N——, having resolved to insist on Louisa’s removing to his house, being convinced that Lord Henry, though why he knew not, was unworthy of his daughter, arrived at the door with his travelling equipage, to put his intentions in execution.

As he drew near the dressing room he heard the sound of music, and sighed when he recollected how very mournful the air was which she had been playing

when he visited her before. "Ah, poor thing! there she is at that mournful work again!" thought Lord N——. But as he came nearer he heard a lively Italian song, and was convinced it could not be Louisa singing. That song was however immediately succeeded by one written and composed by her, and greatly admired by Lord Henry in his days of courtship. The song was as follows:

Why bid my trembling lips explain
The faithful love in which I pine?
Oh! ask not words, for words were vain,
But read my eyes when fixt on thine.
Yet, should this timid, conscious eye,
Bent on the earth, refuse to speak—
Then, Henry, mark when thou art nigh
The *tell-tale blush* that paints my cheek.

"This is very strange," thought Lord N——; "but now I am sure it is Louisa singing; and as soon as the song was ended, the wondering and impatient old man threw open the door, and saw his daughter at the instrument, and Lord Henry sitting by her, his arm fondly encircling her waist; while the delighted Lady Anne contemplated in glad silence the happy change which she had helped to effect.

They rose at his entrance; and while he stood motionless with surprise at the door, they eagerly approached him, and Lord Henry begged him once more to bless their union.

"You are strange people," cried the peer, brushing a tear from his eye. "John, (to the footman,) tell my fellows, they may go home again."

"No—let them stay where they are," replied Lord Henry.

"How! do you know that I am come to run away with your wife?"

"Yes, and so you shall—on condition that you run away with me too. We will all escape, for a short time, to the comfort of rural retirement. Louisa wants country air and a little nursing, and I am to be head nurse. My lord, your daughter and I have both been to blame, and—"

"O no, no, no, believe him not," cried Louisa throwing herself into his arms; "I only have been in fault."

"May be so," interrupted Lord N——, with a degree of parental pique in his manner; "but whatever may have been your fault, I would not change my daughter for any other daughter in Christendom!"

"Nor I my wife," exclaimed Lord Henry.

"Give me your hand," said Lord N——, softened by this speech, "and be assured that I would not exchange the honor of calling Lord Henry Algernon son in law, for that of being father to any duke in Europe—only, I repeat it, you are strange people. Yesterday, there was Louisa whining out a melancholy ditty as long, and as dismal, as I found your face, Lord Henry; and to-day I find her carolling merry and tender strains by the side of her husband, who is smirking like an old maid on an offer of marriage. Such changes! They prove that—"

"That life is an April day," observed Lady Anne, "alternate rain and sunshine."

"The *married* life more especially," interrupted Lord N——.

"Perhaps so," said Lady Anne. "And at last comes the dreadful moment of eternal separation! Oh! wise have that couple been, who have made preparations of fortitude against that hour, by having lived together in such a manner that the pang of parting is not rendered ~~more~~ keen by remorse; and by the dreadful consciousness, that, to the lost partner of their existence, life has been often rendered burthensome by foolish contradictions, unkind refusals, and mortifying and irritating language. 'Tis sweet, 'tis consoling," continued Lady Anne, no unpleasing tear stealing down her cheek as she spoke, "to reflect, that, as far as it was in our power, the lost sharer of our heart knew no cares that we could prevent, and no happiness that we did not endeavor to increase."

"We will live so in *future*, Louisa," cried Lord Henry, "that when we die—"

"Pshaw!" cried Lord N——, "you should never

talk of dying before an old man ; come, let us be off for the country, and give all dismal to the air !”

They obeyed ; and the cares then banished, the errors then repented of, never returned to molest them again ; nor was Lord N—— deceived, when, at any subsequent period of his life, he repeated his declaration, “ that Lord and Lady Henry were the happiest couple in Christendom, and a pattern for all married people !”

THE ROBBER.

MR SEDLEY, a merchant of great respectability and considerable property, was returning one evening rather late to his country house with a large sum of money in his pocket; the whole amount of a subscription which he had just received at a meeting of justices, in order to carry on some improvements in a house of industry near his own country seat.

Mr Sedley had a servant with him, but by some accident or other he was not in sight; when a man sprung from a hedge, and, knocking Mr Sedley off his horse with a bludgeon, prepared to rifle him.

He had already seized one pocket book, and was searching for another, when Mr Sedley recovered from the effects of the blow, and began to struggle with the villain; and having in his hand a small cane with a knife in it, he contrived to touch the spring, and the robber saw with apprehension the advantage which it gave his antagonist. It was a moment of desperation! He wrested it from Mr Sedley's grasp, and was on the point of plunging it in his bosom, when the latter made a violent effort, struck aside the ruffian's hand, and, grappling with him, they rolled together on the ground.

At this moment the servant galloped up to them, and hastened to rescue his master from the nervous grasp of his assailant.

"Hold him fast," cried Mr Sedley, as Allen his servant, seized the robber by the collar, "and bring him along with me to the nearest magistrate."

At this instant, the moon shone from behind a cloud ; and the light falling on the robber's face, Mr Sedley saw that he was very young ; and also saw, with a feeling of painful compassion, that his cheek was colorless, his lip pale and quivering, and that his countenance was that of a being to whom hope was for ever lost.

"What—what could tempt you to commit this outrage?" said Mr Sedley in no angry tone.

"A fiend in woman's shape," replied the man.

"Did you know that I was to pass this way? was I the object of your attempt?"

"You were—it was known why the justices were to meet, and that you were to be a treasurer."

"And who was your accomplice?"

"I had none."

"I mean, what woman tempted you?"

"She shall live for repentance. One victim to justice is enough—I shall not name her."

"What—not if it should be the means of saving your life?" asked Allen pertly.

"No," replied the robber, with a look of contempt.

"I can endure to die, but not to have the death of another on my conscience."

"An excellent joke that, 'faith!" cried Allen, "when you just now attempted the life of my master."

"Do you see no difference in the one case and the other?" asked the robber.

"Not I, really."

"Your master struggled with me—he endangered my life, and I assailed his. I am guilty, and I deserve punishment. But does it follow, that in cool blood, and to prolong my miserable existence, I should sacrifice the life of another?"

"Why, upon my honor, I can't say that I should be very willing to trust you, after that, with the life of another."

"Peace!" cried Mr Sedley ; and in silence they proceeded till they came to two cross roads. Mr Sedley turned to the left.

"The justice, you know, sir, lives to the right," observed Allen."

"But I live to the left," coldly replied Mr Sedley.

"Dear me! are we going home, sir?" asked Allen.

"Silence!" replied Mr Sedley; and in silence they reached his habitation. He took the robber by the arm, who made no efforts to escape; and, desiring Allen to follow them, led them into his study.

There was something in the robber's manner and sentiments that surprised and pleased Mr Sedley. He thought that he must be a man of abilities; and that it was a hard thing for such a man to die an untimely death, as he would do, if tried for, perhaps, a first offence.

Mr Sedley was one of the few (would they were the many!) who think, that, excellent as our laws are in other respects, our criminal code wants revision; who think that death is a punishment too severe for any crime short of deliberate murder; and who feel as men should feel for the frailties of their fellow creatures, and are conscious, deeply conscious, that it is an awful thing to deprive a human being of that life which his Creator has breathed into him. And the moment was now arrived for Mr Sedley to put the sincerity with which he professed these opinions to the proof.

"Search him," said he to Allen.

He obeyed; and found one of Mr Sedley's pocket books upon him. "Here, here, sir; here is evidence that must hang him for felony!" cried Allen (who had picked up a little law-knowledge while acting as clerk and valet to a counsellor on his circuit.) "As to murder, I doubt you cannot indict him for that."

"For murder!" cried the robber, starting. "True, I was very near committing it;" and he seemed to shudder with horror.

In his other pocket were pistols.

"You see, sir, murderous intention proved," said Allen.

"Silence!" cried Mr Sedley; and again he sunk into a reverie, from which he was roused by the increasing agitation of the robber; who, after giving way to the most

convulsive sobs of agony, suddenly burst into tears, and fell at Mr Sedley's feet."

"Pardon me and let me go!" cried he. "I abhor my crime, and its instigator; and never, never will I be guilty of the like again. But 'tis not on my own account that I implore mercy—no; all my prospects in life this wicked action has blasted, and I can never know comfort more, for I can never respect myself; but I have a mother; and I am her only child—her all; and were she to know my crime, she would die—she would indeed. Oh, for God's sake! show mercy to me, and save me from the additional guilt of parricide! My mother! my poor dear mother!" Here, suffocated with his sobs, he sunk on the floor, and even Allen was moved.

"Inconsistent being!" replied Mr Sedley, "so properly considerate now of the feelings of your own mother, so regardless of the feelings of the mother of another! I too have a mother; yet, regardless of what pain you might inflict on my parents and friends, you were going to murder me!"

"I was, I was—but not in cold blood; if you give me up to the law, you do it from reflection, not impulse."

"Who are you? what are you, thou strange mass of contradictions?" replied Mr Sedley.

"My name is Theodore—I have no other name now; at least I will not disgrace my family by owning it. I have been well educated; but my father died insolvent, and my mother and I, but for my industry, would have come to want. All went well with us till I became acquainted with an angel in beauty, but a fiend in disposition. I loved her, as I fancied, to distraction; but I now find that I mistook passion for sentiment. However, I was not rich enough to maintain her, and she threatened to leave me and live with another man, unless I could procure her a certain sum necessary to pay her debts. This made me desperate; I promised to procure it; and she informed me, that she had heard, on such an evening you would receive that sum, and probably return home unattended. You know the rest. Thank

God, you are safe ! and I have at least learned to despise the wretch who led me on to ruin. And oh, sir ! take compassion, I conjure you on my unhappy mother !”

Mr Sedley was embarrassed—he was agitated ; he wished to do right, yet feared to do wrong ; he feared to be blamed by others if he let Theodore escape unpunished ; he feared to be blamed by his own conscience if he delivered him up to justice. If he did the latter, he knew he would undoubtedly be condemned to death ; and that idea was so insupportable that at length he resolved to pardon him, and he addressed him thus :

“ Were the punishment that awaits you, misguided young man, any thing less than death, I should this moment order you to be committed for trial ; but your words and your looks carry a sort of conviction to my mind, that you are a sincere penitent ; and then—and then—” added Mr Sedley, tears choking his voice, “ I can’t help thinking of your poor mother, and her agonies. Therefore, conjuring you, as you value your mother’s peace and your own immortal soul, to forsake your vile companion, and return to the healthful labour of an industrious life, I pronounce your pardon ; and you are free to go where you please.”

Theodore could not speak ; he tried ; but his voice failed him, and he fainted ; while Allen, even though busy in recovering Theodore, could not help exclaiming—

“ Sir ! sir ! Mr Sedley ! sir—you forget—bless me ! this is a sort of compounding of felony, sir ! Think again, sir.”

But Mr Sedley was too intent on recovering the poor criminal to attend to what Allen said.

At length he recovered ; and seizing Mr Sedley’s hand, which he pressed to his lips, he said ; “ Generous man ! do yet more for me ! send me not away ! let me live with you ! let me serve you ! let me devote my life to you !”

It so happened that a scheme of this sort had suggested itself to Mr Sedley ; he had considered, that he should but half do his duty, perhaps, if he turned this young man loose on society, to incur the risk of fresh temptations and

of fresh crimes ; and that it would therefore be better for him to employ him himself, and secure the means of superintending his conduct ; and the wish to do this was considerably strengthened, when Theodore, with looks and tones well calculated to inspire confidence, addressed him as above.

After a pause, Mr Sedley said, "You *shall* live with me ;" and Theodore, clasping his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, tears trickling down his cheeks, as if imploring a blessing on him.

Allen, meanwhile, was convinced that his master was mad ; and again he expostulated with him ; but "Silence !" was his only answer. Still, when he recollected that Theodore was not only pardoned, but was to live in the same house as himself, his pride took the alarm, and in a pert voice he said, "so, sir, this amiable gentleman is to be my fellow servant, is he !"

"No, sir, he is to have your place," answered Mr Sedley.

"My—my place, sir ? What have I done, sir, that I am to be turned away to make room for a—a—?"

"A what?" cried Theodore involuntarily, and looking defiance at him. "But forgive me," he added, "you and every one ought to revile me."

"No one shall dare to do it before me," said Mr Sedley. "Mr Allen, come hither, sir," he continued. "I think you will own, that both you and your family owe me great obligations."

"Certainly, certainly, sir, and we are always very ready to acknowledge our sense of them."

"Are you as ready to *prove* it, sir?"

"I hope so, sir."

"Then, you see this bible—take it, and repeat after me, not only the common oath, but one that I shall dictate ; and swear on the holy word of God never to disclose the transactions of this evening ; that is, never by act, word, or deed, to let any one know, or suspect, that Theodore ever was otherwise than the respectable young man which, I trust, his future conduct will prove him to

be." Allen hesitated : "Remember, sir, you are about to secure my constant friendship, or incur my enmity." Allen took the oath, and Theodore blessed him.

"Now, Allen," said Mr Sedley, "I mean to take your present place away from you ; but it is that I may give you a better. I shall make you one of my clerks ; but at present I have business for you to do at my country house. You are a clever, honest young man, and have respectable connexions ; therefore I shall not hesitate to confide in you."

During part of this speech Allen looked distressed, but his expression was that of gratitude to his master ; and when Mr Sedley desired him, as it was late, to take Theodore with him to prepare a bed for him, Allen obeyed cheerfully ; and in a kind voice desired Theodore to follow him. He did so, having first again blessed and thanked Mr Sedley ; who himself retired to bed, but not to rest ; the occurrences of the night, and their consequences, were indeed enough to banish sleep.

He had been in imminent danger of his life ; and the man who had assailed it he had promised to take into his house, and employ about his person ! And as he reflected on what he had done, he trembled at his own rashness. "True," thought Mr Sedley, "I have only one child, and that a daughter at school, and I have no near relations, nor any one living with me who can be injured or endangered by an association with this unhappy youth ; therefore I am at liberty to please myself, and act up to my own ideas of right in this business. But have I not endangered my own peace ? Shall I be able to follow up my indulgence to this man by a liberal though cautious confidence in him ? Shall I not at times be tormented with suspicions of him ? Shall I not still see him, in fancy, on the point of plunging the murderous weapon in my breast ? And, if he should not be as well disposed as I am now willing to think him, shall I not, if he sees my suspicions, be liable to excite his hatred, and be the object of his vengeance ? He knows he is in my power ; and that, though I bound

Allen by an oath not to betray him, I am not bound to secrecy myself. If then, I ever incur his enmity, how can I be sure that he who has once known what it is to seek the life of a fellow creature, may not, urged by fear and revenge, be easily induced to attempt a similar crime again? However, all these ideas should have occurred to me sooner. I dare not now disappoint the hopes which I have raised; and by endeavoring to give Theodore right motives of action, I will try to prevent all danger of being forced to reprove or distrust him."

Mr Sedley was right in supposing he should not be able to follow up properly his generous conduct towards Theodore; for he was naturally suspicious, and his understanding was not vigorous enough to enable him to reason down his sensations; and a proof of this he soon exhibited.

Mr Sedley's study was apart from the house, and a flight of steps led up to it. One night, when Mr Sedley was writing there, by some means or other, he having fallen asleep over his papers, the room took fire, and he was awakened by the noise and warmth of the flames; nor had he time to contrive any means of escaping, before he became insensible, and fell prostrate on the crackling timbers. When he recovered his senses, he found himself in the open air, supported by Theodore; who, happening to be on the spot when the fire broke out, rushed up the stairs at the hazard of his life, and snatched his benefactor from inevitable destruction. But how could such an accident happen? was the general question. That, Mr Sedley could not tell. But he was too unwell that night to go on with any conversation; and after loudly commending Theodore's courage, and declaring that he owed his life to him, he retired to bed.

The next morning Allen repeated his inquiries how the fire could have been occasioned, and Mr Sedley his answer.

"Well, it is very strange," observed Allen, "that no one but Theodore should be walking by at the very crit-

ical moment? What should he do skulking there at so late an hour, unless he had some particular reason for being there?"

"What reason should he have?" replied Mr Sedley pettishly, and turned away.

But Allen's observation had awakened a painful suspicion in his mind. Was it impossible that Theodore had set fire to the study on purpose that he might watch his opportunity, and rush in time enough to save Mr Sedley's life and property, in order to endear himself to him? or had he robbed him of any bank notes, and hoped to conceal the theft by setting fire to the premises? Then again, these suspicions seemed to him both absurd and cruel, and he would entertain them no longer. Still, in spite of himself, when he saw Theodore, he found that he did not receive and thank him with that ardor which he ought to have felt on seeing the preserver of his life.

"We are on equal terms now," said Mr Sedley, affecting great ease; "I probably saved your life, and now you have saved mine."

"On equal terms!" exclaimed Theodore; "Do not disparage yourself so far as to imagine such a thing possible! You not only saved my life, but you saved my reputation; and you forgave me, though I had raised my guilty hand against you! What I did, I should have been a reptile had I not done—what you did, exalted you to a level with the highest."

Mr Sedley observed with pleasure, not unmixed with compunction, the virtuous warmth and expression of countenance with which he uttered this, and his suspicions vanished; especially when, on Allen's saying to Theodore, "I wonder what could induce you to be walking such a cold night, and at so late an hour near that spot; I should never have thought of such a thing"—the latter replied, darting an indignant yet manful look at him, "You are too happy to delight in wandering at such hours, and in such a season; you never raised your hand against the life of a fellow creature, nor saw your-

self on the point of bringing a parent's grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. You can *sleep*—I *would*, but cannot sleep."

"Still, it is very strange !"

"What is strange ?" replied Theodore, coming up to him with a quivering lip, and an eye full of terrible and revengeful meaning.

"It was strange and fortunate, that you should be on the spot when the fire took place," said Allen turning pale.

"It was fortunate—it was a blessed event indeed," replied Theodore, "and I have not lived in vain."

Mr Sedley immediately held out his hand to him ; and with more heartfelt satisfaction than he had done before he thanked and blessed him ; but he could not be easy without examining the closet in which he kept his papers and notes, and which the fire, luckily, had not touched.

It so happened that Mr Sedley had amused himself by keeping a journal, which was deposited in this closet ; some of it he had made into a book ; but the journal of the last two months was still in single sheets ; and that sheet in which he had noted down his rencontre with Theodore was missing ; nor could it any where be found. This circumstance recalled all his suspicions. Theodore, he concluded, had entered his room when he was absent ; had looked over his papers ; and, seeing his story chronicled, had resolved to destroy the written evidence of his shame ; and then, being a desperate being, he had, to hide what he had done, endangered the premises and life of his benefactor ; but, struck with horror and remorse, had repented, and rushing in, saved both him and his property. Yet surely he could not be such a villain ! and Mr Sedley blushed for his suspicions.

"I will tell him," said he to himself, "of my loss, and watch his looks."

He did so ; and Theodore coolly replied, "Are you sure, sir, that you deposited the sheets which you mention in your closet ? If you did, it is strange that they

should not be there ; for I think I have heard you say that you never leave the closet unlocked ; therefore it appears to me more likely that you should have put the MS. in some other place of security, than that any one should have gone to your closet—a closet that is never open—and therefore, must have been forcibly entered, if entered at all.”

Mr Sedley owned that Theodore was likely to be right ; but he searched in vain for the MS. and at times his suspicions returned.

But for these suspicions, he would have blessed the day when he took Theodore into his house ; for never before had he such a servant—he tried to anticipate even his looks—and Mr Sedley almost forgot that he had grappled for life in the murderous grasp of his arms.

One evening Mr Sedley came home from a visit in the neighborhood on foot, followed by Theodore. Their way lay across the road where Theodore had attacked him ; and Mr Sedley, shuddering as he passed the spot, looked back to see where Theodore was, and what effect it had on him. He was close behind him, and in evident agitation. At this moment, as Mr Sedley turned his head round again, he received a violent blow, which felled him to the ground. When he recovered, he found himself in Theodore’s arms, who was busily chafing his temples.

But Mr. Sedley started from him with horror, and exclaiming—“ Wretch, who gave me the blow ?” he staggered a few paces, and fell down ; while Theodore, with clasped hands, and “ a countenance more in sorrow than in anger,” stood motionless, and too much oppressed to speak.

“ Here it was,” continued Mr Sedley, “ that we first met ; and here I have again received a blow.”

Theodore now found his voice, and coldly replied, “ A blow indeed, and a severe one too ; and though I saw your danger, I could not speak time enough to warn you against it.”

“ Warn me ! what mockery is this ?”

"It is not a mockery, sir, but the fact."

"The fact is, that I was knocked down."

"True ; but the contusion, if you please to put your hand to your head, is, you will find, on your forehead."

Mr Sedley put his hand to his head—the contusion was on his forehead.

"This is very strange," observed Mr Sedley.

"Not at all—you struck your head against the arm of this oak which had been felled, and very improperly suffered to lie here and project over the foot path."

Mr Sedley, convinced and ashamed, tried to apologize to Theodore for his suspicions.

"Apologize to me for suspecting me ! Oh, sir, forbear ! I know but too well, that to be liable to suspicion is one of the just punishments of my crime ; and punishment enough it is, to be deemed by my preserver and benefactor capable of attempting his life."

As he said this, his tone was so affecting, and so full of despondence, that Mr Sedley was agonized with regret for what he had said ; and, taking his hand, exclaimed, "You may forgive me, Theodore, but I know not when I shall forgive myself."

When they reached home, they found Allen anxiously expecting them, and wondering they were so late.

"We have come very slowly," said Mr. Sedley, "for I have been knocked down."

"Knocked down !" cried Allen, fixing his eyes suspiciously on Theodore.

Theodore turned pale ; but it was with indignation. "Yes," replied Mr Sedley, "I have had a violent blow indeed."

"But you will go with only ——," returned Allen, "you will be so fool hardy."

"Miscreant !" cried Theodore, clenching his fist in his face, and giving him a look terribly ferocious, "I will make you repent of this ! Depend on it, I will be revenged !"

So saying, he left the room ; and Mr Sedley explained to Allen how he had received the blow ; to which explan-

ation, Allen, though Theodore's threat had rather alarmed him, listened with a sort of incredulous air, and provoked Mr Sedley to declare, that he would take him to the very spot tomorrow to shew him the tree, and that then he would make him ask Theodore's pardon.

He did so ; and Allen with a very sullen air was beginning his apology, when Theodore, with dignity, but without any seeming trace of resentment, interrupted him, and desired him to forbear ; saying—"I was wrong to resent so warmly what I have deserved so justly. You and my kind master must continue to suspect me, and I must bear your suspicions, if I can, with patience."

The next day Theodore asked leave to go and see his mother, (for whom he had taken a cottage within three miles of Mr Sedley's seat,) promising to return the day after ; but two, three, four days elapsed, and he did not come ; and Allen hoped, and Mr Sedley feared, that he had absconded. On the evening of the fourth day, however, he returned, and in great agitation entered Mr Sedley's study, seized his hand, held it to his heart, and faltering out "God forever bless you !" staggered into a seat, and burst into tears.

"What has happened? what can be the matter?" cried Mr Sedley.

"My mother is dead ! and though I mourn, I rejoice," replied Theodore. "She died blessing me, and calling me the pride and comfort of her life. Oh, sir ! but for you I should have had her curses, not her blessings !"

Mr Sedley could not speak, his heart was too full. He saw the happy parent on her death bed, blessing that son for his virtues, who, but for him, might have expired on a scaffold for his guilt, and have perished, in the prime of youth and activity, for a single crime of which he had bitterly repented ; and the cheering glow of conscious benevolence thrilled through his whole frame.

"Now, sir," cried Theodore, rising, "my poor mother's peace is in safety ; now, come what may, her

heart will never throb with agony for the crimes of her child !”

“ But had she lived,” said Mr Sedley kindly, “ it might have throbbed with pleasure at the recital of her son’s virtues and success in life.”

“ Never, never !” answered the self-judged Theodore. “ What, *I* ! a robber and a murderer in intention, if not in fact ! *I* have virtues ! *I* have success in life ! Impossible ! The consciousness that there exists two witnesses of my guilt and shame, and that I am daily exposed to be suspected and reproached by them, would palsy all my exertions, and wither all my enjoyments.”

“ But I will never suspect you again, Theodore ; and I never taunted you with your past fault.”

“ No ; *you* never did ; but Allen has taunted me with it, and will taunt me again.”

“ No—I will forbid it ; and do, dear Theodore, try to forget that there are two persons in existence, who know that for a few moments you were not as virtuous as usual. Do forget it, or I shall fancy that you wish me dead.”

“ Wish *you* dead !” answered Theodore ; “ No—but—”

“ But Allen’s death, I suspect, would not grieve you.”

“ I should endeavor to grieve for it,” gravely replied Theodore, and left the room.

When he was gone, Mr Sedley revolved in his mind all that had passed in this conversation ; and he found that the latter part of it left a painful impression. For his *own* safety he could not fear, but he feared for Allen’s. A mad passion had once armed Theodore against the life of a fellow creature who had never injured or offended him ; and revenge for repeated insults, as he felt them to be—revenge, a powerful passion also, might urge him to murder Allen ; especially as he, himself excepted, was the only evidence of his crime.

But then again, how inconsistent were these fears with the conviction which he was continually expressing of Theodore’s talents, and the excellence of his heart ! and,

angry with himself, he resolved to dismiss his suspicions for ever.

A short time after, he was invited to spend a day or two at the house of a friend in the country, but one who was not able to receive his servant as well as himself; he was therefore obliged to leave Theodore behind him; and in spite of his reasons, he felt afraid of leaving him and Allen together. However, he struggled with this foolish fear, as he called it, and set off for his friend's house. But the painful images which he could no drive away at home, haunted him continually during his visit. He continually saw in his dreams, Allen struggling with Theodore; and unable to endure the terrors which poisoned his satisfaction in the society of his friends, he returned home.

The first person whom he met was his house-keeper, with a look of consternation.

"What is the matter? what has happened?" cried Mr Sedley.

"Allen has disappeared," was her answer; and Mr Sedley sunk half fainting into his chair.

"Disappeared! When, how, where?" faltered out Mr Sedley.

"Two days ago. He had seemed uncomfortable for a day or two before, and he seemed so unwell that Mr Theodore insisted on going with him to his room, and sitting with him after he was in bed; and he was the last person who saw him."

"Indeed!" cried Mr Sedley, shuddering.

"Yes—Oh, he was so kind! The next morning, Allen's breakfast being ready, I tapped at his door; but nobody answered, though I knocked again and again. At last I begged Mr Theodore to go into his room. He did; but he was gone, and his clothes were gone too. Nor, though Theodore went in search of him immediately, have we heard of him from that time to this."

"Dreadful! horrible!" exclaimed Mr Sedley, wringing his hands.

"Dear sir! what, do you think he has made away

with himself, that you take on thus? If so, he would not have taken his clothes with him."

"Leave me!" cried Mr Sedley; "where is Theodore?"

"Out, sir."

"When he returns, send him to me."

"My forebodings were but too just, then!" cried Mr Sedley, "and he has murdered him! and his blood is on my conscience!" He then paced the room in agony; and while he did so, Theodore entered. Mr Sedley at sight of him started, shuddered, and hid his face with his hands.

Theodore but too well understood what this action meant—the reception was just what he expected; and with folded arms, and pale as death, he stood silent before Mr Sedley. But he vainly expected Mr Sedley to speak; he knew not how to word the terrible accusation which he wished to utter; and there was a dignity of manner, and a certain expression in Theodore's countenance, which gave a direct denial to the charge. While he continued to pause, Theodore said, in the tone of resigned despair,

"You have not kept your word with me, sir—you promised never to suspect me again; and at this moment I see that you look on me as poor Allen's murderer."

"I do; and after what has passed, after the last conversation which we had together, who would not suspect you?"

"I may be wrong, but I think no one *ought* to suspect me; for the very circumstances which you mention are strong arguments in my favor. Had I wished to destroy the poor man in question, should I have ventured to do it, knowing, as I must do, that your suspicions would naturally at first light upon me? The moment I found Allen was gone, I knew my fate."

"Your fate!" replied Mr Sedley; "what do you mean by that? I will do nothing rashly; I will advertise this unhappy young man, I will make strict search

for him ; and not till all search and inquiry are vain, will I—”

“ What ? ”

“ Consider how I am to act. In the meanwhile, let me hear your story.”

“ *My story* is soon told,” answered Theodore with a sarcastic smile. “ Soon after your departure, I observed a change in Allen’s appearance ; he became pale and low spirited, and it was evident that something weighed heavily on his mind. This excited my compassion ; I knew but too well what it was to have a load on the spirits, and I felt for him. Still, for some time, I did not obtrude my suspicions of his uneasiness upon Allen himself. At length, however, I could not help taking notice of his visible anxiety ; but, rather rudely, he repulsed the expressions of my sympathy, and the offer of my services. But, the evening preceding his disappearance, he seemed so wretched, and so agitated, that I insisted on accompanying him to his room, and on remaining with him during part of the night. I did so ; but in vain did I endeavor to obtain his confidence ; and his behavior to me was an odd alternation of insult, and gratitude for my attention. At three in the morning I left him, and apparently more composed, and disposed for sleep. At eight in the morning he was gone.”

This story certainly bore evident marks of truth ; and had the relater of it been any other than Theodore, Mr Sedley would not have doubted its correctness. But suspicion does not reason, it only feels ; and Mr Sedley had for some time past expected that Theodore would revenge himself on Allen, for his continual allusions to his crime, and also for being an evidence of that crime.

“ Well, all this may be very true,” said Mr Sedley, after a pause.

“ May be very true ! ” cried Theodore, trembling with agitation ; “ by the great Great God who created me, I swear that I have uttered the truth, and nothing but the truth ! ”

"Leave me," replied Mr Sedley; "I want to be alone."

Theodore obeyed ; but, as he left the room, he turned his eyes on Mr Sedley with a look of such humble reproach, and such deep wo, that he wished from the bottom of his soul that he could assure him he no longer suspected him.

In a short time Mr Sedley had laid his plan of action ; an advertisement was put in all the papers, and active search begun in the neighborhood ; nay, the ponds in the garden were dragged ; but all these methods proved fruitless ; weeks elapsed, and no Allen was seen or heard of.

During all this time, Theodore never left the house, though Mr Sedley was in hopes that he would make his escape. But so far from seeming to wish to effect it, he appeared resolved to be forthcoming whenever he should be called for ; and he was continually hinting to Mr Sedley, that if he had it in contemplation to take him up on suspicion, he should make it a point of conscience to be in readiness.

But the idea of proceeding thus, agonized every feeling of Mr Sedley ; still, he feared it was his duty to do so. To others, indeed, Allen's disappearance seemed nothing unusual ; and the idea of his being murdered did not enter the imagination of any one but himself ; but it was natural enough that *he* should imagine it. Yet, notwithstanding the suggestions of his conscience, when Theodore, on all inquiry for Allen having proved fruitless, demanded to know his fate from Mr Sedley, the latter declared, that it might perhaps be his duty to take him into custody on suspicion, but that his feelings would not let him do it ; he must therefore leave him, if he was guilty, to the vengeance of heaven and the stings of his own upbraiding conscience.

Theodore made no reply to this speech, he only grasped Mr Sedley's hand with a sort of convulsive pressure ; then, faintly articulating, "God bless you !" he rushed out of the room.

The next morning he was not to be found, but the following letter was lying on his table :

"You believe me, I know you do, to be the murderer of Allen; and though my whole soul recoils at the cruel suspicion; from you, such a suspicion is retributive justice. I know that I have deserved it; but I cannot bear to exist under the consciousness of such an imputation. Therefore, I am going in search of Allen; nor, unless I find him, shall you ever, with my consent, hear of me, or behold me more.

"Farewell! and be assured that with my last breath I shall bless and pray for you. THEODORE."

A thousand mixed emotions agitated Mr Sedley's heart on reading this letter. At one moment he loathed his suspicions, at another he felt them confirmed; then the next instant, his hopes of Theodore's innocence amounted almost to certainty. When it was known in the family that Theodore was gone in search of Allen, the lamentations which the loss of him occasioned, and the expressions of admiration of his generosity, and exclamations of "But it is so like him, for he never seemed to think of himself, or his own inconvenience," which burst from every member of it, awakened an interest so deep for that unhappy young man in Mr Sedley's breast, that he wished to recall him, and endeavor once more to reconcile him to himself.

In a few months, Mr Sedley being continually haunted by the idea of Theodore and Allen, and his mind in consequence dwelling perpetually on one subject, his appetite failed him; he slept little, ate less, and was so altered a man, that his friends insisted on his calling in medical advice. He did so; and his physician seeing very evidently that something pressed heavily on his mind, recommended him to change the scene, and mix in the gay society of a watering-place.

With this advice he reluctantly complied; but at length he found the benefit of it. In spite of himself he was amused; and at last he was interested in the company with whom he associated. Nor was it long before he became so captivated with the charms of a young lady whom he frequently met in public and in private com-

panies, that he made her an offer of his hand, and was accepted.

Nor, during the time of his courtship, or while he continued absent from his own house, did the images of Theodore and Allen recur in their usual gloomy manner, to oppress and agitate his mind.

But as soon as he returned to his home, his old associations resumed their influence ; and Mrs Sedley beheld with painful astonishment, her cheerful, entertaining husband changed into a nervous and silent hypochondriac.

Mrs Sedley was not a woman to endure what she did not like, in silent acquiescence. She reproached, she railed, she expostulated ; and having a high idea of her own eloquence, Mr Sedley had to listen to a long and daily oration on the folly of low spirits ; till at length, being aware that the cause of his depression was more *real* than she imagined, and piqued at having his lowness attributed to unfounded folly, he resolved to unburthen his mind to his wife, and lessen the weight, which, for want of due participation, had long worn down his mind, and preyed upon his frame. And in a few moments, the long-treasured secret was a secret no longer ; for Mrs Sedley told it to all her acquaintance ; and Mr Sedley, shocked at his wife's indiscretion, and ashamed of his own folly in confiding to her a secret that endangered the life of a young man whom he had pretended to befriend and protect, felt more miserable after he had unburthened his mind than he had done before.

And his misery was soon increased by the torrent of reproaches which overwhelmed him on all sides, for not having given Theodore up to justice for his first offence. He was told, that he had let loose a monster upon society, and that he would be responsible for all the robberies and murders which Theodore would in future commit.

Unfortunately, Mrs Sedley's brother and some of her cousins were in the law, and he was tried and convicted of folly and criminality, by legal, and consequently, unanswerable authority. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Mr Sedley, a man whose heart was kinder

than his understanding was strong, should be told that he had acted weakly and wickedly, till he thought so himself; especially when, on examining a well near his garden, in order to ascertain the possibility of widening it, a body was discovered in it bearing evident marks of violence.

But near two years elapsed, and no Theodore was again heard of; and most devoutly did the wife-led Mr Sedley pray that he never might be seen or heard of more; when a groom, who lived with Mr Sedley after Allen's departure, and before Theodore went away, wrote word from London, that he had seen Theodore alight from the Portsmouth coach.

"I am sorry for it," cried Mr Sedley, turning pale as he read the letter. But his more manly wife laughed at his pusillanimity, and did not leave him till she had prevailed on him to go and make his deposition before a magistrate, in order for the apprehension of Theodore.

To be brief—the deposition was made, and the warrant granted; and it was served on Theodore just as he was coming out of a mail-office yard.

Theodore started, but smiled indignantly when the warrant was served on him, and when he found that he was taken up on suspicion of having murdered Allen. But he sighed, and sighed deeply, when he saw that Mr Sedley was his accuser, and reflected on the nature of the grounds on which his suspicions were founded. He assured the officers he had no means of escape, nor intention of escaping; all he begged was to be allowed to write a letter to a friend, who would, he expected, call for him at the office in an hour or two; and they allowed him to write, while they stood at the door. Then Theodore having asked how long it would be before his trial came on, and finding the assizes were approaching, set off with his jailors for the prison in the county where the crime was said to have been committed.

As soon as Mr Sedley heard that Theodore was actually in prison, his agonies of mind were unspeakable, and he bewailed the day when he first confided his cares to

his wife ; or indeed, he regretted the moment when he was rash enough to marry ; for Mrs Sedley was completely a domestic tyrant ; she was one of those notable, busy, dogmatical, and shrewish women, (and there are such,) who piqued themselves on carrying every point that they have once declared they will carry ; one of those sweet tempered beings, who, after they have been reasoned with for hours on the impropriety, or folly, of an action which they are going to commit, coolly answer, " No matter, I will have my own way, and there's an end of it."

And even such a woman was Mrs Sedley.

But Mr Sedley, whether out of pique to his wife, or from remorse of heart, was never so convinced of Theodore's innocence, as now that he was going to prosecute him for a supposed murder ; nor could he be easy without sending to Theodore in prison, to know if there were any conveniences or indulgences that money could procure, which he wished to have ; because, if there were, his purse was at his service ; and he assured him most earnestly, that he had been compelled to take the steps which he had taken against him, and that he repented of what he had done, from the very bottom of his soul.

Theodore replied, that he wanted nothing in prison but what he was rich enough to procure ; and that he knew very well how reluctant Mr Sedley had been to prosecute him. He added, that he should always remember that Mr Sedley's present severity to him was against his inclination, but that his past kindness was the unforced offering of his own generous heart.

Mr Sedley read this letter, and was more miserable than he was before ; nor could he help loudly protesting that the idea of being forced to appear against Theodore, occasioned him insupportable anguish ; though he knew that he was only going to perform a duty incumbent on him, as the body found in the well, in size and shape exactly resembled Allen ; as the clothes on it were such as he wore when he disappeared ; as the linen of the murdered man was marked W. A. and as such parts of

the features as were not disfigured by violence bore a strong likeness to the features of Allen.

Theodore, meanwhile, on being asked when he meant to consult with his counsel, declared that he did not mean to employ any, but should plead his own cause; and except one friend who visited him in prison, he saw no one, but busied himself in drawing up his defence.

Indeed Theodore rejoiced in the opportunity of defending himself publicly, and telling his own story; nor would he, if he could, have avoided his trial, because he found that his character had been most cruelly injured, or rather utterly talked away, by Mrs Sedley, and the real facts so distorted by misrepresentation, that in a court of justice only could he hope to clear himself—and to that he confidently appealed.

The day appointed for the trial at length arrived, and the court was crowded at an early hour. When Theodore appeared, every eye was turned upon him with eager curiosity, and Mr Sedley could with difficulty be kept from fainting, while even Mrs Sedley herself felt her animosity against her husband's former *protégé* considerably softened, when she saw in the imagined culprit, a handsome, tall, graceful youth, whose deportment was calculated to excite respect, whose countenance invited confidence, and whose large dark eyes sparkled with intelligence. "I hope he will be acquitted," was the general whisper through the court; and Mr Sedley, overhearing it, devoutly cried "Amen."

This was an act of rebellion against his commander in chief; it consequently restored her to all her implacability; and she trembled with impatience till the counsel for the crown opened the prosecution.

He began by an eulogium on the great and well known humanity of Mr Sedley, and drew from it an argument to prove the very bad opinion which Mr Sedley must have formed of the prisoner's wickedness, founded on the most irrefragable evidence; when he, even *he*, this man made up of the milk of human kindness, was induced to withdraw the protection which he had formerly

shown him, and take him up on a charge of murder. Having then called witnesses to prove the discovery of the body, and to prove also that it was the person of a murdered man, and the probability of its being the body of Allen, he proceeded to bring evidence to prove that Theodore was the person who murdered Allen ; but before he did this, he lamented that he was forbidden, by the mercy and forbearance of the laws of this country, to relate some previous occurrences in the prisoner's life which had a strong tendency to establish the likelihood of his guilt in the present instance. (During this part of his speech, Theodore was violently agitated, and so was Mr Sedley.)

The principal and strongest evidence against the prisoner, was, it may be supposed, Mr Sedley himself. He arose, pale and trembling, almost unable to speak, and declared on oath, that Theodore had in his presence protested that he would be revenged on Allen, in consequence of the daily taunts with which Allen insulted him. After his examination, a long and various one, was at an end, Mrs Morris, Mr Sedley's house-keeper, was called to prove the circumstance of Theodore's having insisted on accompanying Allen to his room, and of his having been the last person who saw him ; and she gave her evidence with so many tears, intermixed with such heart-felt praises of the prisoner, and prayers for his deliverance, (while the court vainly tried to stop her affectionate effusions,) that her emotion became contagious, and Theodore himself was visibly affected.

Here ended the evidence for the crown ; and the prisoner was told that he would now be heard in his defence. Theodore then, after a few moments of evident emotion and embarrassment, began as follows :—

“ Gentlemen of the jury,

“ You have just heard a very animated speech, delivered with every grace of gesture and manner, and I know that I shall appear to every possible disadvantage after what has just been heard, especially as I rise to

disclose to you in all its enormity, that guilt to which the learned gentleman who has just sat down only remotely alluded ; for I am resolved that all shall now be known of me that can be known ; I am resolved that the only crime which I ever committed shall be publicly acknowledged by me ; and I rejoice that I am thus arraigned at a public tribunal, because it enables me to lay aside all concealment, and prevents me from ever trembling again in the presence of any one, from the fear of detection.

“ Mr Sedley, gentlemen of the jury, could have informed you, had the law allowed him, that, hurried away by a mad and fatal passion for a worthless but fascinating woman, and agonized by the fear of losing her, I consented, in a moment of desperation, to lie in wait for him on the highway, and plunder him of his property ; but he could not have told you, nor can I myself give you the faintest idea of the horror and remorse which seized me when I had committed the action ; when I saw myself obliged, in self-defence, to plunge still deeper in crime, and endeavor to take the life of Mr Sedley then, in order to prevent him from taking mine by means of the law at a future season. Oh ! if I live a century, the agony of that moment will never be effaced from my recollection ! But thank God ! my murderous efforts were frustrated ; Mr Sedley was rescued, and I made a prisoner.

“ Oh, hour of wretchedness ! As I walked with him to his house, I saw nothing but my poor mother’s frantic agonies when she heard of my guilt ; I heard nothing but her agonizing shrieks, her dying groans ; and methought that with her last breath she cursed me, and called me parricide.

“ Ye who have affectionate parents, and who feel as children should feel ; imagine, if you can endure to do it, my tortures at that moment. Mr Sedley, (and may every blessing here and hereafter be his !) Mr Sedley saw and pitied my distress—he pitied my poor mother—he pitied me ; he thought that I was a true

penitent ; and he nobly and piously thought that he should do an action more acceptable in the eyes of the Supreme Being, by allowing me to live for repentance and amendment, than if, by delivering me up to justice, he cut me off in the prime of youth and expectation, and at the same time run the risk of *destroying* my poor mother by sorrow and disgrace.

“ He forgave me ; he did yet more—he trusted me ; he allowed me to devote my life to him ; and he promised, if on trial he was contented with me, to bestow yet further favors on me, and give me the means of being useful to him and to my fellow creatures.

“ I fell at his feet, fainting from excess of gratitude and joy ; I recovered ; and my heart took a voluntary vow, that from that day forward he should never have to blush for the being whom he had preserved ; but, on the contrary, that my conduct should be such as to defy the severest inspector to fix on it, with *justice*, the slightest imputation of guilt. I vowed ; and I have kept my vow ; yes, I have kept it faithfully, although you see me here arraigned before you as a revengeful, hateful murderer.

“ But I bless God that I have been so arraigned ; as I know that I can prove my innocence of that crime, and of every other, except the intended robbery.

“ Besides, the false and injurious reports which have so industriously been spread against me in this country, I have now an opportunity of reducing publicly to a mere relation of matters of fact ; and I shall have to answer for no crime but that which I in reality committed ; and therefore have I suffered myself to be confined in a dismal dungeon—therefore have I consented to appear thus as a criminal at the bar.

“ But I shall obtrude no longer on the patience of the court, than by a few short observations. I would hold myself up as a dread example to the young of the danger of illicit connexions, and of the fatal influence of a first crime on the whole of our future life. I know by that action, committed at the instigation of

illicit passion, I have for ever blasted my prospects in life, and condemned myself to lead a joyless existence as an insulated, unattached, and solitary being; for never shall a wife of mine be reproached with my disgrace; never shall a child of mine be taught to blush at calling me father. No—all my future life must be spent in constant endeavors to expiate, by a series of active duties, the one disgraceful action which I committed against the interests of society and myself. By the death of a distant relation I am become rich; and I look forward with the cheering hope, that those who this day have seen me tried as a murderer, and heard me own myself a robber, in intention at least, shall one day hear of me as a being who, dead to every personal gratification, endeavors to find happiness in administering to that of others; and, above all, who desires to make his peace with God and man, by atoning for one deeply repented crime by successive acts of utility and virtue. Now nothing remains for me to do, but to ask a few questions, and then call one witness."

Here he ceased; and as soon as the strong effect and emotion produced by his speech had subsided, he put the following questions to Mr Sedley:—

"It has been industriously propagated, sir, that I purposely set fire to your study, and for two reasons; First, because I knew that my life was in your power, and consequently wished to lay you under an obligation to me of a nature so sacred as to make it impossible for you ever to deliver me up to justice; I therefore set fire to your study that I might rush in and save you from the flames at the apparent risk of my life.

"Secondly, sir, I set fire to your study, it has been said, in order to burn some pages of a journal written by you, in which my crime was noted down. I now therefore call on you to declare upon oath, how far such reports have been authorized by you."

"They have not been authorized by me," replied Mr Sedley eagerly. "I confess that at first I did sus-

pect that the fire was not accidental ; but I soon learned to blush for my suspicions, especially when, on Allen's expressing his wonder that you should be so opportunely on the spot when the fire broke out, you answered, that not being able to sleep much, from remorse and uneasiness of mind, you were in the constant habit of taking a solitary and midnight walk, and that you commonly walked past my study ; and I here publicly and solemnly declare, that you, at the risk of your own life, rushed through the flames in order to preserve mine."

"Now then, sir, to the second report," said Theodore—"Did you ever find the papers which you missed after the night of the fire, and which led you, I am told, to suspect the fire not to be accidental?"

"I did—I found them locked up in a closet in my own lodging-room."

"There is yet another charge against me, which has been circulated in conversation—namely, that I one evening, as I was following you home, gave you, with a murderous intent, a blow on the forehead which felled you to the ground."

"A most false and calumnious charge indeed," indignantly exclaimed Mr Sedley ; "the blow was proved, even to the satisfaction of Allen himself, to have been given me by the arm of a tree which projected over the path ; for the blow was on my forehead ; whereas, had it been given me by you, it must have been on the back of my head. In short," said Mr Sedley, "I know of no actual guilt which can with justice be imputed to you, except that of the intended robbery ; and God grant that you may prove yourself as free from the guilt of murder, as I believe you to be of all the charges which you have now mentioned."

"I thank you from the bottom of my soul, sir, for this open and public justification," cried Theodore ; "now the expectations which led me to submit to the disgrace and anxiety of a public trial are fully answered, and I have nothing more to do but to free myself from the charge of murder ; to do this, I shall only call one witness."

As he said this, his voice faltered, and the heart of every one throbbed with anxious expectation.

"Call one William Allen," cried Theodore.

He was called.

"Here!" answered the man, bustling through the crowd up to the witness bar, as if eager to show himself; while Mr Sedley joyfully exclaimed, "O! God! it is he! it is Allen!" and Mrs Morris, in her joy, threw her arms round Allen's neck, and was carried in a violent hysteric out of court.

"What is all this?" cried the judge; "Who is this man? who is Allen?"

"My lord," replied Theodore bowing, "this is William Allen, the man for whose murder I stand arraigned."

A shout, a universal shout was heard, till the judge commanded silence.

"And why was he not produced before? Why did you not come forward, sir, before?" said the judge, addressing Allen.

"Because Mr Theodore would not let me, my lord; and I am bound to oblige him, whatever he asks. But if it be not informal, I should wish to be allowed to tell my story."

"No—no," replied the judge; "this is a strange business, and I have had enough of it. Let the prisoner be discharged; and I shall adjourn the court till after dinner." Theodore was accordingly discharged, and the court adjourned. But though the judge was unwilling to listen to Allen's relation, every other person in court was eager to hear it; and Allen, while standing at the witness bar, with great satisfaction told the following story to the attentive and crowded audience around him;—

"I must own I behaved very wrongly in taunting Mr Theodore for the crime of the intended robbery to which I was privy; and I took an ungenerous advantage, as he was in my power, to let him know I suspected him of being capable of committing other crimes, as he had committed one. And one day I did provoke him

so much, that, in Mr Sedley's hearing, he vowed he would have his revenge of me; and sure enough he has had it; for I never shall forgive myself, though he has forgiven me, for my ill conduct to him."

"Go on," cried Theodore gently.

"Well," continued Allen, "I received some news which afflicted me greatly, and made it necessary for me to quit my master, and take French leave of every one. But in the interim I was so wretched, that Mr Theodore saw my uneasiness; and though I had always behaved like a dog to him, he spoke to me in the kindest manner, lamented my evident distress, and earnestly begged to know whether it was in his power to alleviate it. I rudely repulsed him, and refused any assistance from him. Indeed, neither he nor any one could assist me. However, on the night of my disappearance, Mr Theodore insisted on accompanying me to my room, for he thought I was likely to make away with myself; till at last, though I was too proud to confide the cause of my distress to him, I was so overcome by his kindness, that I cried like a child, and thought how little I had deserved it. He left me at three; and in an hour after, I had packed up my things and was off."

Here he paused.

"Well, sir, go on," cried one of the counsel who remained to hear Allen's story; and pray tell us whither you went. This has a very suspicious appearance, to go off without assigning any reason to any one, and suffer yourself to be supposed dead!"

"I had my reasons, sir."

"Name them."

"The truth was, a dear friend, a very dear friend of mine, was to be transported for a felony; and being afraid he should die on the passage, as he was in bad health, he wished me to get leave to go with him; indeed it was my duty to go; for, to speak the truth, this friend of mine was my own father. He is dead and gone now, poor soul! and from the bottom of my heart I believe he was entirely innocent of the charge for which he suffer-

ed, though the circumstantial evidence was strong against him. Well, I obtained leave, as the kind-hearted gentleman in office approved my motives for asking it. Besides, my father was innocent, I am sure he was." Here he stopped, and wept bitterly, while his audience sympathized in the feelings of an affectionate child.

Allen soon recovered himself, and went on ;—

"While we were stopping to take in water on the voyage, a swift-sailing vessel from England overtook us, and who should I see coming along-side of us in the boat but Mr Theodore! Oh! how shocked and surprised was I to hear that Mr Sedley suspected him of having murdered me, and that he was sure nothing but my actual appearance could clear his character! But that, for the present at least, was impossible. He then proceeded to tell me how, by the most indefatigable inquiries he had traced me to Newgate, and even to on board ship, though I had changed my name to that assumed by my father on his trial. That finding it impossible for him to carry me back with him to Mr Sedley's, as I could not and ought not to leave my father, he had hurried back to London, and requested an audience of the great man who had been so kind to me; and having told his lordship how necessary to his peace and welfare it was, that he should be on the spot, in case of my father's death, in order to bring me back to England as soon as possible, he also obtained leave to go to Botany Bay, and he carried with him a letter of recommendation to the governor—so greatly, I fancy, had his way of talking, and his appearance, prejudiced his lordship in his favor.

"When we landed in New Holland, Mr Theodore was soon usefully employed; for my part, I had enough to do to attend on my poor sick father, and many is the time that Mr Theodore has come to assist me in my mournful task."

Here his voice faltered again, but he went on ;—

"At length my poor father died; and, dear! how kindly did Mr Theodore try to console me! Indeed, he

was so kind, that I was even more impatient than himself to return to England; and we anxiously waited for a vessel to carry us back, and enable me to clear up his character to Mr Sedley; when one day as we were walking with some of the criminals, who were showing the governor's secretary grounds which they had been clearing, one of them who was transported for highway robbery, but who was also a dexterous pickpocket, picked the secretary's pocket of his purse; but the gentleman having felt the hand in his fob, immediately gave the alarm, and the skilful villain conveyed the purse into my pocket. The secretary, an angry man, insisted that we should all be searched, and the purse was found on *me*! On which, while I was nearly dead with agony and shame, he ordered me into custody. But Mr Theodore interferred; and assuring him that he knew me well, and that he was convinced I was incapable of the crime imputed to me, and came to Botany Bay in consequence of my virtue, as he was pleased to say, and not my vices, he more than half convinced him that the guilt was in reality that of some great proficient in the art of pocket-picking, who had dexterously transferred the appearance of criminality to me; and at his earnest entreaties I was immediately liberated.

"But in the meanwhile, Mr Theodore's quick eye discovered in the real culprit great signs of guilt; and in the fellow's hearing, he bade the secretary take care that a strict watch was kept over that man, pointing to him.

"Still I was regarded with suspicion by the secretary and others, and Mr Theodore was told he had better not be so much with me, as it injured him in the estimation of his employer. But he replied that he knew I was an injured man; and that if no one else countenanced me, he would, whatever might be the consequences to himself. But the real criminal never forgave either him or me from that moment; and meeting me one day alone, the thirst of revenge got the better of all other considerations—he fell upon me with a design, no doubt, of taking my life; but just as I was quite faint with struggling, and

gave myself over for lost, Mr Theodore came in sight, and I am proud to say that I owe my life to him and his generous exertions.

"As I sobbed out my thanks to him—never, never shall I forget the agony with which he wrung his hands, and said, 'Yes, Allen—I have now saved two lives ; but still I feel that the satisfaction which this reflection imparts to me cannot counterbalance the misery of knowing that I was once on the point of taking away the life of one fellow creature. Oh ! Allen,' added he, 'reflect on my sad fate, and think of its retributive justice. Behold me self-condemned, with my prospects blasted in the prime of youth, only because I was guilty of crimes in intention ; and I, who was merely tempted to endeavor the crime of murder in *self defence*, was exposed by that one uncommitted fault to be suspected of the dreadful wickedness of murder in cold blood, and from the suggestions of malice and revenge.'

"At length the villain who had injured my reputation and assailed my life was sentenced to die for a felony which he had committed ; and at the gallows he completely cleared me from the guilt which he had caused to be imputed to me. The next week a vessel was about to sail for England, and Mr Theodore obtained leave for us to take our passage in it. We did so, and were landed safe at Portsmouth ; whence we came to London by the coach.

"During the journey, to our great surprise and consternation, we heard from a native of this town, whom we took up on the road, the whole story of my disappearance, and of Mr Sedley's suspicions in consequence of it. In short, we heard, amply detailed, every circumstance relative to this unhappy business. I was so exasperated that I was about to discover myself ; but Mr Theodore, in a whisper, conjured me to be silent ; and as I said before, I could refuse him nothing ; then, in answer to some inquiries of his, we learnt that Mr Sedley, a good natured, kind hearted man, as they called him, but not over wise, had been made a fool and dupe

of by Mr Theodore ; but that, on his marriage with Mrs Sedley, a sharp, clever, managing woman, with all her wits about her, and one who would have her own way, she had got from him the whole secret concerning Mr Theodore and me, which weighed on his mind and ruined his health ; and on the discovery of the body of a murdered person in the well, she had insisted that he should cause Mr Theodore to be taken up, if ever he was seen in England again.

“ And sure enough he was known, and taken up soon after in London, while expecting me at an inn in Holborn. Instead of him, I found a letter from him informing me of what had passed ; and the misery and indignation I felt were so great, that they completely made me insensible of the pleasure I should otherwise have experienced, at finding by the same letter, that he was, by the death of a relation, become possessed of a considerable fortune. But I should have set off directly for Mr Sedley’s house, had not Mr Theodore positively forbid my visits to him in prison, unless I would come so disguised that no one could know me.”

“ But suppose, sir,” said the same gentleman who had spoken before, “ you had died before Mr Theodore’s trial came on ! I think your friend incurred a very foolish risk by his fine scheme of standing a trial to clear his reputation publicly, for he might have been hanged notwithstanding his innocence.”

“ No, sir,” replied Allen, “ not so—real gratitude does not do its work by halves ; I took the precaution, knowing a little of the law, to go and discover myself to my sister and her son, and I put it in their power to prove beyond the possibility of doubt, on the day of trial, should any accident happen to me, that I was alive and well after Mr Theodore was taken up for having murdered me.

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This story impressed every auditor with the strongest feelings of pity and admiration for Theodore, while it also raised the relater in every one's esteem ; and the late criminal at the bar was congratulated and complimented by some of the first characters in the county. Mrs Sedley, meanwhile, had stolen unobserved out of court. She had prided herself on making her husband accuse Theodore, in order that she might prove her power over him ; and believing implicitly in her own sagacity, she had persuaded herself that he was guilty, and that his conviction would tend to confirm more than ever the general opinion of her superior intelligence. Nor, to do her justice, was it possible for any one not to own, that after the discovery of the body, which so many circumstances seemed to prove to be the body of Allen, though it afterwards turned out to be that of one William Althorpe, it was an act of necessary justice in Mr Sedley to take up Theodore on suspicion of having murdered him, and so far she was perfectly right in instigating her husband to take the steps which he did. But she was not right in detailing every where, with eager and indefatigable minuteness, all the circumstances which had attended Mr Sedley's acquaintance with Theodore. She was not right in endeavoring to prejudice the minds even of his jurymen against the unhappy youth, and in causing paragraphs relating to the whole business to appear in the provincial and other papers ; and her conscience now whispered her that she had done this, and in so doing, had acted the part of a malignant persecutor. And wherefore had she done it ? Merely out of opposition to her husband, and because he persisted in believing that he had acted right in not giving up the youthful criminal to justice. Therefore, whenever she told the story, it had been interlarded with " but had Mr Sedley been so fortunate as to know *me* then, had he consulted *me*, and taken *my* advice, this childish, wicked action of his, which he calls *generous*, would not have been performed ; and then the poor, unfortunate, good, honest creature Allen would have been alive to this time ! for this wretch Theodore would have

9 paid the forfeit of his crime on the gallows." It is to be supposed that Mrs Sedley's auditor's agreed with her implicitly in opinion, and complimented her on her sagacity ; consequently, Mrs Sedley looked forward to the hour of Theodore's condemnation as a season of triumph for her. But Theodore was acquitted, and what she had expected would be his disgrace, turned out his glory ; and Mrs Sedley's shame and confusion were in proportion to what her hopes of exultation had been. Besides, what a triumph it was for Mr Sedley ! and how should she ever be able to rule him again !

These thoughts, and the violence of a temper unused to contradiction, operated so forcibly on a very delicate and consumptive frame, that when she got home she found herself seriously ill ; and though Theodore had certainly not taken the life of Allen, it was by no means so certain that he had not contributed to endanger the life of Mrs Sedley.

But while Mrs Sedley hastened out of court to hide her feelings from every one, Mr Sedley could not bear to go without having some conversation with Theodore. Yet, how could he venture to approach him ?

But Theodore spared him the effort ; he accosted him, he seized his hand, he thanked him again and again for his past kindness, and that mercy which had saved him for atonement and amendment ; and declared to him, that he could easily excuse and pardon his enforced act of hostility against him ; nay, more, that he applauded it as an act of rigid duty.

" Oh Theodore ! I would, but dare not ask you home with me," cried Mr Sedley ; and Theodore understood him.

But many gentlemen and ladies too, in court, had been so prejudiced in his favor by what had passed, that invitations flowed in on him on all sides ; and the self-condemned, the contrite Theodore, saw himself the object of interest and respect.

To conclude my story ; Mrs Sedley, the victim of her own bad temper, did not long survive Theodore's

acquittal, and her husband felt relieved by her death. True, she had beauty ; true, she had talents ; but her temper enveloped them in a baleful mist ; and made their attractions ineffectual, as a rose growing by chance in the midst of the holly bush ; and its formidable thorns would vainly tempt the hand of the passenger to cull its fragrant beauties.

On her death, Mr Sedley invited Theodore to live with him as his friend and companion, and to assist him (which he was very capable of doing) in the education of his only daughter, who was at school when Theodore first entered his family ; while Allen, who had resolved never to leave Theodore, was made principal clerk to Mr Sedley.

But Theodore, faithful to his resolution, was not contented with saving Mr Sedley the fatigue of attending to business, and assisting him to form the mind of his child ; he devoted his fortune entirely to the purposes of charity, and his leisure hours to endeavor to comfort those who mourned from misfortune, or from the consciousness of guilt. But his most favorite mode of relieving distress was that of lending sums opportunely to tradesmen on the brink of bankruptcy, and by that means preserving them often from ruin ; for he knew that, had his father been so assisted, he and his mother should not have been reduced to absolute beggary, nor he have been obliged to leave college when about to distinguish himself there.

In the meanwhile, Mary Anne Sedley grew in beauty and in virtue ; and Theodore was as fond of her as even her father was ; but, alas ! he found at length, that though their affection was the same in degree, it was not the same in nature ; and Theodore, looking upon himself as incapacitated by the crime of his early youth, to become the husband of Miss Sedley, or of any woman, resolved to undertake a long journey, and not to return till Mary Anne was married.

He at length summoned up resolution to communicate his intentions to Mr Sedley, and he did so in the presence of his daughter ; who started, and immediately left the room in tears.

"You see, Theodore, how the idea of losing you hurts that poor girl," cried Mr Sedley; "have pity on her, if you have none on me."

"Oh, sir," replied Theodore, "allow me to have pity on myself."

He then laid open to Mr Sedley the state of his heart, and had the satisfaction of finding that Mr Sedley, despising the objections which might be urged by the world against his giving his daughter to a man disgraced as Theodore had been, would rejoice to bestow her on this well-trying pupil of sorrow, this repentant child of error. Besides, he was convinced that his daughter loved him; and in answer to Theodore's reasons for not marrying, which were such as he had urged on his trial, Mr Sedley answered, "Well, I shall say no more; but Mary Anne shall decide."

He then went in pursuit of her; and having made known to her Theodore's love, he led the blushing but happy girl back into the room where he had left him, and Mary Anne heard from himself a disclosure of his passion, and the reason why he could not think of endeavoring to gain her affections.

"You need not take that trouble," replied Mary Anne; "for my father emboldens me to tell you, that my affections are yours already."

Away, for the moment at least, fled Theodore's disinterested resolutions and sage principles of action. He was beloved, and he was happy! But his fears returned; and relinquishing again the hand which he had so fondly held, he exclaimed, "No; it cannot, must not be—and I am doomed to be miserable."

"Mr Mortimer," cried Miss Sedley, (for Theodore had re-assumed his own name,) "you certainly have a right to be as miserable as you please, but not to make me miserable also, and I own that my happiness depends on you. And how weak are your arguments against becoming a husband! Is it not said, that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance?"

And why should we suppose that mortals should dare to treat with contumely those whom the Deity regards with looks of complacency? Besides, suppose that any one were to approach me, as you choose to imagine such a thing possible, with your juvenile error, should I not feel myself and you above the reach of the petty malice, while I answered, "He makes me the happiest of women?"

"But could you be happy, while conscious that I was to some people an object of scorn and aversion?"

"Why not? Those people ought to be, and must be, objects of scorn and aversion to me; and could my happiness be influenced by the opinion of the weak and the narrow-minded? Your crime was real and great, but so have been your virtues; and why should one crime be deemed heavy enough to outweigh many good actions?"

"But to have my children reproached with their father's crime!"

"Let them hear of it first from you—let them see how one fault can embitter a man's whole life, and they will tremble how they err themselves. Nor is it possible for children to be taught by any one to regard that parent with contempt, whose active virtues they are in the daily habit of witnessing. Once for all, remember that these fears are *only* fears, and may never be realized; whereas our mutual love is *reality*; and if fear is to be conqueror in this business, I shall be the sacrifice to what you imagine is virtue, but what I consider as weakness. Yet one thing more; remember I myself am a natural child, and to some might be an object of scorn."

Theodore was in love—Mr Sedley was earnest in his solicitations, and Mary Anne—oh, how eloquent Mary Anne was! Theodore at length accepted the hand she offered—he married, and was happy. Nor had his wife and children ever reason to lament or recollect the repented crime of his youth, except when the remembrance of it cast a cloud over his brow, and forced him from their dear society, to indulge the salutary sorrow in temporary solitude. Meanwhile Mr Sedley, contemplating

with pride the active virtues of Theodore, used to say to himself with a tear of honest self-approbation ;

" Society owes me a great deal. Had I given Theodore up to the laws of his country, he would not have lived to benefit and ornament it. Aye, well does the French proverb say, '*Qui n'est que juste est dur*;' and I bless the day when I ventured to forget the magistrate in the man.

" But was it right to forgive him ? and would not persons act very unwisely and wickedly, who should pardon great criminals in general, and let them loose on society, in hopes that they might one day or other turn out sages, Howards, and lawgivers ?"

Alas ! there are few Theodores. Still, though for blood I would have blood, except in very few cases indeed ; I venture to express my wishes that the punishment of death was not so dreadfully frequent as it is. I wish that our legislators would not be so lavish of life, that important gift, which no one can restore ; but would, contenting themselves with inflicting such punishment on offenders as does not preclude hope, put it in their power, by a revision of their criminal laws, to bid the trembling wretch repent, and live.

NOTE.

I beg leave to give the following extract from the entertaining Memoirs of Mr Cumberland, that veteran in the field of literature, whose mind, as rich and inexhaustible as the purse of Fortunatus, is always able to answer to his various demands on it, and has for years supplied an admiring world with the choicest stores of amusement and instruction.

" How liable he, (Dr Bentley,) was to deviate from the strict line of justice by his partiality to the side of mercy, appears from the anecdote of the thief, who robbed him of his plate, and was seized and brought before him with the very articles upon him. The natural process in this man's case pointed out the road to prison. My grandfather's process was more summary, but not quite so legal.

" While commissary Greaves, who was then present, and of counsel for the college *ex officio*, was expatiating on the crime, and prescribing the measures obviously to be taken with the offender, Doctor Bentley interposed, saying, ' Why tell the man he is a thief ? He knows that

well enough without thy information, Greaves. Hark ye, fellow, thou seest the trade which thou hast taken up is an unprofitable trade; therefore get thee gone; lay aside an occupation by which thou canst get nothing but a halter, and follow that by which thou mayst gain an honest livelihood.'

"Having said this, he ordered him to be set at liberty, against the remonstrances of the bystanders, and insisting upon it that the fellow was duly penitent for his offence, bade him go his way and never steal again.

"I leave it to those (says Mr Cumberland) who consider mercy as one of man's best attributes, to suggest a plea for the informality of this proceeding."

And I request such of my readers as may be inclined to censure with bitterness the lenity of Mr Sedley, to recollect, that if he erred, he had the honor of erring in the same manner as did the great and excellent Dr Bentley.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

EMILY VILLARS, an almost portionless, but very beautiful orphan, had long been the idol of the men and the envy of the women, in a large country town in ——shire; when Mr Melbourne, then high sheriff for the county, saw her at an assize ball, and was so captivated with her beauty, that in a short time after he made her an offer of his hand, which being readily accepted, he set off for London directly, in order to make such preparations for their marriage, as were worthy his fortune and the merits of his intended bride.

In the meanwhile, the happy Emily and her happy uncle, a thoughtless and dissipated, but kind hearted man, who had been to her at once a guardian and a parent, were the constant theme of conversation in the town of —— . Some of their friends, at a large party, kindly insinuated, that Mr Melbourne's going to London had a suspicious appearance; for why could he not have *sent* to order all he wanted? Another lady, after vainly endeavoring to establish it as a fact, that a very terrible hereditary disease was in Mr Melbourne's family, observed with a sigh, that such disproportionate matches seldom turned out well; while a disappointed father, who thought his daughter quite as handsome as Emily, observed, that he did not think Mr Melbourne's fortune was as large as was supposed; and his wife kindly added, "Whatever it is, Miss Villars can *spend* it, I dare say."

Still, whatever envy and disappointment might suggest, every one believed that Miss Villars was about to be

most fortunately married; and, to use an expression which I have often heard with disgust from the lips even of youth and beauty, every one thought that she had made a very good *catch* in the matrimonial line.

Meanwhile, the fair object of these kind remarks was looking forward with delight to her apparently smiling destiny, and was preparing, unconsciously to herself, to realize the fears of some who loved, and of many who envied her.

True—Mr Melbourne had youth, a fine person, elegant manners, and an immense fortune; and so captivating was he in appearance, that Emily, as she saw him ride into town with the judge beside him in his carriage, could not help wishing herself the wife of so charming a man. But in every respect but fortune, Emily was his superior; and, however splendid may be the possessions of a man, and however specious his manners; unless his heart, temper, and disposition accord with those of the woman he marries, she will soon find, if she has sense and sensibility, that her proudest mansion is but a gorgeous prison, and that the envied idol abroad may be a hopeless wretch at home.

Emily Villars united to youth and beauty, quick talents, strong sensibility, and a heart deeply susceptible of kindness, and equally susceptible of injuries. Wherever she loved, she exacted ardent love in return; wherever she paid attention, she eagerly expected it; and this disposition, which, to a husband by whom she was beloved, and whom she tenderly loved, would have been the charm and cement of their union, was the likely means to make her life unhappy with a husband of sluggish affections and of fashionable indifference.

Mr Melbourne was a man of the world, a man of intrigue, and a man of fashion. He loved to have the smartest carriages, the best horses, and the handsomest mistress in London; and at length a new caprice and vanity urged him to wish to have the most beautiful wife; therefore, when he saw Emily Villars, and deemed her the most beautiful girl that he had ever seen, he resolved

of by Mr Theodore ; but that, on his marriage with Mrs Sedley, a sharp, clever, managing woman, with all her wits about her, and one who would have her own way, she had got from him the whole secret concerning Mr Theodore and me, which weighed on his mind and ruined his health ; and on the discovery of the body of a murdered person in the well, she had insisted that he should cause Mr Theodore to be taken up, if ever he was seen in England again.

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to marry her. He did so, and looked forward with delight to the gratification which his pride would receive the ensuing winter from the homage which would be paid to her charms in London; and while Emily's delighted guardian gave her to him at the altar, rejoicing that he had lived to see his niece's happiness secured, he was far from suspecting that he had united her to a man who had too little taste to value or cultivate her talents; too little sensibility to delight in the almost morbid extent of hers; and to whom her beauty, splendid as it was, would soon cease to be of great importance, except as the means of triumph to his vanity.

After a residence of some months at their country seat, and a long tour through Wales, during which Emily observed in her husband an insensibility to the beauties of nature which ill accorded with her ardent admiration of them, they repaired to the metropolis, and took possession of a large and magnificent house in Grosvenor square, where Emily was soon introduced into all the gaieties of modish life.

Emily was new to the world, and particularly so to the fashionable world; hence, when she gave her hand and her heart to Mr Melbourne, she imagined that not only the wish, but the opportunity of future conquest was gone forever; and that whatever admiration her beauty might excite, it would be silent and respectful—admiration, such as she might observe without a blush, and her husband without a frown. But she soon found that she had been mistaken; for she beheld herself as much the object of particular attention from men of all ages as if her hand and heart had as yet been undisposed of; and, to her infinite surprise, she saw that Mr Melbourne observed it not only without alarm, but with obvious pleasure. Nor could she behold his tranquillity on these occasions without uneasiness, as she had always considered jealousy as a necessary attendant on real love; and therefore, she sometimes feared that Mr Melbourne's tranquillity might be the result of decaying affection; but ever ready to flatter herself, she the next moment attri-

buted his *sang froid* to his confidence in her virtue; and being convinced that he would never have reason to deem his confidence misplaced, she gave herself up to the enjoyment of universal admiration, and eagerly pursued the gay career which Mr Melbourne had thoughtlessly encouraged her to begin. But her gaiety was soon interrupted by a very unwelcome discovery; namely, that Mr Melbourne was as truly a man of high ton, as those who made her the object of their homage. She found that, if men of fashion admired her, women of fashion admired her husband; and that if she did not inspire jealousy in his bosom, it was most decidedly the inmate of her own.

At first, her feelings, never under the control of her reason, vented themselves in tears and sullenness; and instead of enjoying the attention paid to her wherever she appeared, she was employed in watching the attention which Mr Melbourne paid to others; till, having observed that his vanity was gratified by the visible jealousy which she could not help betraying, and that he beheld with cold conceit the torments which she endured, wounded pride conquered the pangs of apprehensive affection, and she resolved to be as fickle and as indifferent as he was.

At this moment, this important moment, a new lover was added to her train; a man whose admiration could instantly raise the object of it into the idol of the day, and who had the reputation of never having sighed in vain. He was celebrated also for never having lost any conquest which he had gained. He continually forsook, but had never been forsaken. Even Mr Melbourne lost all his wonted tranquillity and confidence in his wife's attachment to himself, when he saw her the object of Colonel Dorville's attentions; and in his turn, spite of his pride, he became watchful and suspicious.

But, alas! these symptoms of affection were now exhibited too late; he had sported with Emily's feelings, with Emily's pangs; and she had learnt to disregard him. He had weaned her heart from him, by wounding her

pride ; for he had delighted in exciting her jealousy by marked attention to other women ; and above all, he had set her an example of infidelity.

" At length," said the deluded Emily to herself, " my hour of revenge is come ! and the husband who wantonly threw from him the heart that was wholly his, shall feel in his turn the pangs which he inflicted." In vain did she recollect that Mr Melbourne's disinterested love had raised her from obscurity to distinction ; she had learnt to think that her charms might have procured her a higher rank in life, as lords and dukes had offered her their vows of homage, and made her look on the love of Mr Melbourne as a tribute due to her excelling graces.

Still, when she uttered her threats of revenge against Mr Melbourne, the emotion which made her voice falter, and her lip tremble, proved a degree of pique towards her husband, which shewed that all love for him was not extinguished ; and had he, following the impulse of his heart, confessed his past errors and his present jealousies, their union might, perhaps, have been cemented again. But Mr Melbourne's jealousy unfortunately shewed itself in bitter sarcasm, and a sort of proud defiance ; and while he angrily interferred to prevent the now increasing levities of his wife, he seemed to have no consciousness of the culpability of his own conduct.

But whatever may be the ill conduct of a husband, cruelly deluded indeed must that wife be who thinks his culpability an excuse for hers, or seeks to revenge herself on her tormentor, by following the bad example which he sets her. She is not wiser than the child, who, to punish the wall against which he has struck his head, dashes his fist against it in the vehemence of his vengeance, and is himself the only sufferer from the blow.

All chance for the recovery of the lost happiness of Mr Melbourne and his wife, was not, however, entirely over. Emily was on the eve of becoming a mother ; and as the appointed time drew near, a thousand new and delightful sensations throbbed at her heart, and promised " to wean her from the world she loved too well." She

had always been fond of children ; and the hope of having a child of her own, awakened all the long dormant sensibilities of her nature ; and even Mr Melbourne was regarded by her with kindness and complacency, as the father of the anxiously expected offspring.

Mrs Melbourne had resolved that her confinement should take place at the country seat, that she might be attended by an old and favorite practitioner in the neighborhood ; and Mr Melbourne was eager to promote the execution of this plan, in order to remove her from the dangerous society of Colonel Dorville. Into the country, therefore, she hastened ; and while looking forward to the joy of being a mother, she bore without repining, the temporary seclusion to which she was for a time obliged.

At length she gave birth to a son and heir, which was warmly welcomed both by Mr Melbourne and his family ; and in a succession of virtuous and pleasing occupations, arising from maternal love, the joys of vanity and the giddy delights of the world were for a time forgotten ; and had Mr Melbourne condescended to be a sharer in them, this unfortunate, but truly lovely and fascinating young woman, might still have been the pride of her husband and the idol of his family. But Mr Melbourne, too fashionable to bear to be supposed enamored of his wife, soon relapsed into his usual inattention, and would have been a stranger at home, had not Colonel Dorville unexpectedly taken up his residence in the neighborhood.

Too proud to appear jealous, Mr Melbourne instantly waited upon him, and invited him to his house, and Colonel Dorville instantly accepted the invitation ; nor could Mrs Melbourne see without resentment, that her husband, as if wholly indifferent to the care of his honor, had thought proper to introduce as his guest into the house, the man whose attentions to her had been too marked to be misunderstood, and who was universally known to be as successful as he was daring.

But she soon lost all inclination to blame this strange step of Mr Melbourne, when she found how much the society of Colonel Dorville added to her happiness ; when

she found all her wishes anticipated by his eager, yet respectful attentions ; when his delighted eye was fondly fixed on her as she lulled her infant to sleep on her lap ; and when his lips breathed forth half-uttered accents of admiration and tenderness, while she devoted herself to the most vigilant attendance on her child at a time when it labored under a severe indisposition ; and when he anxiously sat by the side of the sick infant, while its inattentive father was enjoying the noisy pleasures of the chase ; besides, the man who thus shared her anxieties, and soothed by his attentions the wound inflicted by the neglect of her husband, was one whose graces excited the admiration of all women, and the envy of all men ; and this captivating being lived but upon her smiles, and wished to exist only as long as he was dear to her ! Nor, master as he was of the art of dissembling, did Colonel Dorville on this occasion express more than he felt. He was seriously in love for the first time in his life ; and his passion was likely to be a lasting one, if any passion that has not esteem for its basis can be allowed to be durable in its nature.

To be brief ; while Mr Melbourne, with seeming calmness, but real anxiety, was, lest he should appear jealous of his rival, madly exposing his wife to the seductions of a practised libertine, that unhappy wife was listening to those seductions ; and, strange to say, while she drew in with greedy ears his flatteries on her maternal tenderness, she was gradually preparing her mind to admit of her unnatural desertion of that child, her care of whom made her appear so amiable. Such are the inconsistencies of human feeling and character.

At this dangerous moment, the uncle and former guardian of Mrs Melbourne became a bankrupt, and Mr Melbourne refused to assist him in any other way than by allowing him a small annuity for life ; and that only on condition that he should retire into Wales, and not disgrace their state by his poverty, when they came down to their family seat.

This conduct, this *conditional* kindness to an humbled

individual, and her near relation, and one whom she so very tenderly loved, irritated her already excessive sensibility almost to madness ; and her feelings were rendered still more painful by the intelligence, that the broken-hearted old man, being obliged by poverty to accept Mr Melbourne's ungracious bounty, had, as soon as he arrived at his retreat, given way to a destructive habit of drinking spirits in order to banish care, and that he had brought on disorders which threatened to be fatal.

Emily immediately implored leave to hasten to her uncle, but her husband refused to grant it ; nor indeed, as she was a nurse, was such a journey desirable for her ; she then entreated Mr Melbourne to go himself ; but this he positively refused ; and she was weeping over the forlorn and unattended state of her exiled relative, when Colonel Dorville insisted on going to him himself ; and having obtained a letter of introduction to him, he set off for Wales, with the blessings and thanks of the grateful Emily.

He arrived time enough to attend the last moments of the dying man, and to deserve, by his patient attendance on him, his thanks and prayers. He closed his eyes, he followed him to the grave with all the grace of seeming piety, and then returned to London with a quiet conscience, to seduce the nearest relation of the man whose dying breath had blessed him, and to make his kindness to the uncle the means of ruin to the niece.

Mrs Melbourne received him with every expression of gratitude and affection ; and in proportion as this kind action raised Colonel Dorville in her estimation, her husband sunk in it ; for, oh, how different had his conduct been !

At length Mrs Melbourne was convinced by her seducer's arguments, that it was right to leave the husband whom she could no longer love and esteem ; but she conditioned that her child should be the partner of her flight ; this, she, however, was soon convinced was impossible, as Mr Melbourne would have a right to seize it, and take it away from her wherever she was. She, therefore,

found that she must either give up her infant or her lover ; and having, in a moment of fatal weakness given him a claim on her, to repent and retract was now impossible ; till at last she became convinced that it was her duty to be the companion of him whose happiness depended on her, and to leave the man whose happiness was wholly independent of her ; and in a rash and evil hour she left that infant whose sick couch she had bathed with tears—that infant, whose life her watchful tenderness had preserved, to the mercy of hired servants, and eloped to the continent with her fascinating seducer.

At first, Mr Melbourne's grief, though he concealed it from every eye, was deep, and promised to be lasting ; but eager to dissipate it, he joined a party to the Hebrides, while the prosecution for a divorce was pending, and his little boy was left at nurse in the neighborhood of his family seat. In a few months after, his marriage with Miss Villars was dissolved by act of parliament, and he married a second wife, not so young nor so beautiful as his first wife, but in rank and fortune superior to himself.

As soon as the divorce took place, Emily expected that Colonel Dorville, according to his promises, would marry her ; but she found with agony and indignation, that nothing was further from his thoughts, though he was passionately devoted to her, and though he had taste enough to value her for those talents and accomplishments which had been wholly thrown away on Mr Melbourne.

This refusal on his part, and expectation on hers, proved a constant source of contention between them ; nor was this ill-starred and guilty union cemented by a family. Vain were all their wishes on this subject—it was not allowed to these children of error to taste the pure joys of paternity ; year succeeded to year ; and the child whom Emily had abandoned was old enough to ask questions concerning his mother, and still she had no second child ; while Dorville and Emily were soured and disappointed.

"Alas !" said Emily to herself, "I have a child—and what would I not give to behold him once more !" and while her heart fondly yearned towards him, she felt in the bitterness of her soul, that in her regrets for the loss of her child, Mr Melbourne's injuries were well revenged.

At length Colonel Dorville, who since the elopement, had resided on the continent or in Ireland, was called to England on business ; and Emily accompanied him, fully resolved to obtain, if possible, a sight of her deserted son. Accordingly, she contrived to gain intelligence concerning him and Mr Melbourne ; yet all she could learn was, that there was no child at the town house, but it was believed that there was a little boy at the country seat. "He lives then !" exclaimed Emily to herself, "and I may yet see him !" and immediately taking advantage of Colonel Dorville's being gone some miles out of town, she set off for —, and concealing her face in a long thick veil, she ventured to leave her chaise, and set off on foot for the environs of Mr Melbourne's seat.

But the agony of the moment when she first caught a glimpse of that house where she had lived respected and beloved, and where she had first known the transports of a mother, was so overwhelming, that she sunk prostrate on the earth ; and her heart, her proud and indignant heart, by its incessant throbs, proclaimed, but too late, that it was not formed to endure with patience and contentment the consciousness of crime and of disgrace.

As she approached the lodge, she saw faces entirely new to her at the door of one of them ; and taking courage, she asked who lived at that fine house, and whether the family was down ?

"The family is not down," was the answer.

"But is there no one of the family down—no child or children ?"

"There are no children by this lady. There is one little boy by the first."

"By this lady ? Is Mr Melbourne married again ?"

"Oh, yes—and, belike, madam is not fond of children, for poor master Aubrey is sadly neglected by her

THE MOTHER AND SON.

EMILY VILLARS, an almost portionless, but very beautiful orphan, had long been the idol of the men and the envy of the women, in a large country town in ——shire; when Mr Melbourne, then high sheriff for the county, saw her at an assize ball, and was so captivated with her beauty, that in a short time after he made her an offer of his hand, which being readily accepted, he set off for London directly, in order to make such preparations for their marriage, as were worthy his fortune and the merits of his intended bride.

In the meanwhile, the happy Emily and her happy uncle, a thoughtless and dissipated, but kind hearted man, who had been to her at once a guardian and a parent, were the constant theme of conversation in the town of —— . Some of their friends, at a large party, kindly insinuated, that Mr Melbourne's going to London had a suspicious appearance; for why could he not have *sent* to order all he wanted? Another lady, after vainly endeavoring to establish it as a fact, that a very terrible hereditary disease was in Mr Melbourne's family, observed with a sigh, that such disproportionate matches seldom turned out well; while a disappointed father, who thought his daughter quite as handsome as Emily, observed, that he did not think Mr Melbourne's fortune was as large as was supposed; and his wife kindly added, "Whatever it is, Miss Villars can *spend* it, I dare say."

Still, whatever envy and disappointment might suggest, every one believed that Miss Villars was about to be

most fortunately married; and, to use an expression which I have often heard with disgust from the lips even of youth and beauty, every one thought that she had made a very good *catch* in the matrimonial line.

Meanwhile, the fair object of these kind remarks was looking forward with delight to her apparently smiling destiny, and was preparing, unconsciously to herself, to realize the fears of some who loved, and of many who envied her.

True—Mr Melbourne had youth, a fine person, elegant manners, and an immense fortune; and so captivating was he in appearance, that Emily, as she saw him ride into town with the judge beside him in his carriage, could not help wishing herself the wife of so charming a man. But in every respect but fortune, Emily was his superior; and, however splendid may be the possessions of a man, and however specious his manners; unless his heart, temper, and disposition accord with those of the woman he marries, she will soon find, if she has sense and sensibility, that her proudest mansion is but a gorgeous prison, and that the envied idol abroad may be a hopeless wretch at home.

Emily Villars united to youth and beauty, quick talents, strong sensibility, and a heart deeply susceptible of kindness, and equally susceptible of injuries. Wherever she loved, she exacted ardent love in return; wherever she paid attention, she eagerly expected it; and this disposition, which, to a husband by whom she was beloved, and whom she tenderly loved, would have been the charm and cement of their union, was the likely means to make her life unhappy with a husband of sluggish affections and of fashionable indifference.

Mr Melbourne was a man of the world, a man of intrigue, and a man of fashion. He loved to have the smartest carriages, the best horses, and the handsomest mistress in London; and at length a new caprice and vanity urged him to wish to have the most beautiful wife; therefore, when he saw Emily Villars, and deemed her the most beautiful girl that he had ever seen, he resolved

Aubrey, child-like, longed for all the pretty things that he saw ; while his mother beheld with unspeakable agony, that her son, and the heir of thousands, and who, had she remained the wife of his father, might have indulged all his little whims and wishes, was now obliged to be contented with what a solitary sixpence could procure him. This distress was a foolish one, but it was natural. It was better for a child that he should not have more money to spend ; and so Mr Evelyn thought ; but Emily felt as if his disappointment was owing to her guilt ; and unable to bear the longing looks which he gave the toys and sweets after his slender pittance was expended, she accosted him, and in a faltering voice told him he was such a sweet boy, that whatever he wished to have, she would pay for.

"Thank the lady, Master Aubrey," cried the footman ; and the child, with the smile of a cherub, as Emily thought, looked up in her face, smiled, and said, "Thank you, ma'am."

It was too much to bear—her child had spoken to her—had thanked her—had thanked the mother who—The thought was insupportable ; and Emily, turning away, hurried through the crowd to indulge her tears. When she returned, she found Aubrey with his hands full of toys ; and as soon as he saw her, he came running to her, crying, "May I have all these?"

"Oh, yes !" replied Emily—"but will you kiss me for them?" The child put up his pretty mouth to her directly, and Emily kissed him so fondly, and so often, that the child struggled to get free.

At length, being loaded with toys and sweetmeats, Aubrey wished to go home and shew his treasures to Mr Evelyn ; and Emily followed him till they came near a path leading to the parsonage ; there she stopped—it was the last time that she should see Aubrey again for many, many years perhaps ; and unable any longer to control her emotions, she begged the footman to stop one moment ; then, kneeling down, she clasped her arms round her child, wept over him, and blessed him. "Take this,"

she cried, "and keep it for my sake"—(giving him her watch and seals)—"and you, young man," she continued, addressing the servant, "tell your master, that the lady who gave this watch to Master Melbourne, thanks and blesses him, and humbly hopes that he will continue his fatherly care and instruction to him, and try to make him in every respect like himself." Then folding the astonished boy in a last embrace, she made the best of her way to her chaise, and in a tumult of contending emotions was conveyed back to London. The next day, Colonel Dorville returned with her to Ireland.

When Mr Evelyn saw the little boy returning, loaded with toys and sweetmeats, he eagerly ran out to meet him, and inquire how he procured them.

"Oh, sir," replied the footman, "a lady bought them for Master Aubrey, and she gave him this fine watch too, and bade him keep it for her sake;" and here he stopped, for Mr Evelyn had seized the watch, and seeing E. V. on one of the seals, was convinced that the child had seen his mother; and his frame shaking with emotion, he continued gazing on the seal, and inattentive to every thing else.

At length, he shook off the feelings that oppressed him, and was going to ask more about the lady, when the footman said, "And, sir, the lady sent a message to you."

"To me!" cried Mr Evelyn, starting.

"Yes, sir—she said—she said—lack-a-daisy, what was it? do you know, Master Aubrey?"

"She said I was a sweet little boy," answered the child.

"No, no—that was not it; she said, Tell your master that I thank and bless him, and beg him to keep Master Melbourne, and make him as good a man as himself; aye—no, that's wrong—and make him quite like yourself, sir."

"Did she, did she say so?" cried Mr Evelyn, hurrying into his study, and shutting the door after him. But almost instantly re-opening it, he called the footman and the little boy in.

"But did she not call herself any name?" asked Evelyn.

"No—but I think she must be near a-kin to Master Aubrey; for she kissed him, and cried over him, and blessed him so; I declare, I never see'd any thing of the like before—it was quite moving, she took on so."

"Was she not very beautiful?" said Mr Evelyn.

"Ye—yes, she was a likely woman enough; only you see, sir, she was so very pale, and her eyes looked a little red or so, from crying so much."

"But was not the tone of her voice very sweet?"

"Why, as to that, I can't well say, sir, for she was a little hoarsish, as one may say, from taking on so; and she sobbed, as it may be, so—" Here he imitated a sob; but Mr Evelyn did not think it could be at all like Emily's sob. However, there was no doubt that she it was who had accosted her son, and sent the message to him; and so strict were Mr Evelyn's principles, that, finding how strong the emotion was which this circumstance excited in his usually well governed mind, he rejoiced that she had not paid a visit to the parsonage; but still more he rejoiced to find that she had still some of the feelings of a mother; and from that hour, he taught the little Aubrey, in his prayers for his father, his friends, and fellow creatures, to pray for his mother also.

But the unexpected appearance of Mrs Villars, as she now called herself, so near his habitation, unsettled Mr Evelyn's mind for some time. He had made the servant and the child describe minutely, all she said, looked, and did; and the little Aubrey was endeared to him by having been the means of procuring for him, his once loved Emily's thanks and blessings. He was pleased to think that she knew he had the care of her son; and as the thoughts of happier days thronged to his remembrance, he could not help saying to himself; "Ah! had she married me, she would never have been guilty! I should have loved her so truly, so devotedly, she could not have had the heart to leave me; but Mr Melbourne, a gay, faithless husband—" Here he paused, shocked at his own want of principle;

for he found ~~that~~, seduced by the whisperings of still powerful affection, he was seeking to excuse an adulteress.

But to return to Mrs Villars ;—

The sight of her child, by awakening in her bosom every dormant particle of maternal tenderness, and creating there a constant craving for his presence, did not tend to reconcile her to the disgraceful situation in which her guilt had placed her ; and uneasiness of mind had such an effect on her temper, that she drove from his home to seek the consolations of company and the bottle, the man for the enjoyment of whose society she had violated the most sacred ties.

Nor was it long before Colonel Dorville, from the indulgence of the vice of drinking, became an object of disgust to her ; and their domestic scenes were daily embittered by mutual reproaches, and regrets that they had ever met. But their disputes usually ended in Emily's urging Colonel Dorville to make her his wife, and his positively refusing ; declaring at the same time, that the passionate love which he still felt for her as a mistress, would vanish entirely, if he gave her the chilling name of wife.

I will not dwell on the years of domestic wretchedness which now succeeded to each other ; during which, Mrs Villars had reason to suspect that Colonel Dorville, spite of his fondness for her—a fondness, which not all their quarrels, and her change of temper could destroy, was addicted to low amours, and by that means gave the finishing blow to the faint affection which she bore him ; and it was at length with a sort of sad, vindictive pleasure, that she reflected she was not his wife, and was at liberty to leave him.

At this time, a young man about her own age became a constant guest at their house ; his name was Lorimer ; and his manners, mild, elegant, and insinuating, formed a striking contrast to those of Colonel Dorville's riotous companions. Lorimer had also taste and talents, and there was a degree of pensiveness, almost amounting

to melancholy, in his appearance, which, Emily soon discovered, her society and her smiles alone had power to remove. Nor was it long before she discovered that Lorimer loved her, and not with a passion founded on the hopes of success which her situation gave him, but with a degree of timid respect, which proved the delicacy and sincerity of his love.

Some circumstances, not worth detailing, at length, however, emboldened Mr Lorimer to declare his affection, and Emily received it without displeasure ; for, so liable are we all to self-delusion, that she saw no additional crime in loving another man, as she was Colonel Dorville's mistress, not his wife ; and the consequence was, that, being roused almost to madness by some reproaches of Colonel Dorville, ending, as they commonly did, with the vain-glorious taunt that he defied her to leave him, for that no woman yet had ever had resolution to do that, she resolved to accept the offered protection of Lorimer ; and, as reputation was lost to her for ever, endeavor at least to find quiet and contentment.

No words can do justice to the frantic rage of Colonel Dorville, when he found that she was gone ; and his only consolation was the hope of vengeance ; but of this hope he was soon deprived. Aware of his violence, the lovers left the kingdom immediately, and changed their names. They did not indeed go abroad absolutely to avoid Colonel Dorville's resentment ; the delicate state of Lorimer's health made their residence in a warm climate desirable ; but, as any agitation of mind had a dangerous effect on his health, Lorimer wished to spare to himself a rencontre with a man whom he was too ill to meet in the field.

Abroad, and undisturbed, they remained several years ; and such was the constant attention which Mrs Villars paid her sick lover, that his mother, a woman of high rank, but not of very scrupulous morals, wrote to thank her for her care of her son ; and kept up a regular correspondence with her. This circumstance, and the

unabated affection which Lorimer entertained for her, led Emily to imagine probable, an event in which all her hopes were fixed. She wished, she hoped to become the wife of Lorimer, and to lose in that respectable title the constant memorial of her misery and her frailties. .

She had also another motive, independent of decided esteem and affection for him, which prompted this desire. She had always earnestly wished to be known to her son ; but as a mistress, she felt that she should never dare to solicit him to see her ; as a wife, she knew that she should be more courageous, especially if she was raised by her husband to the rank of a viscountess, as she well knew the power of rank and title, even over the virtuous and the wise ; and had often seen women noticed on account of their situation in life, by those who would have turned from them with disdain, had they only been of the same rank as themselves. And this rank, this purifying rank, Lorimer had it in his power to bestow on her ; for on the approaching death of his father, he would be a viscount ; and Emily's heart throbbed with delight, while she imagined it possible, that as Lady Cardonnel she might hope to be pressed to the heart of an affectionate child !

Little did she know the heart of Aubrey Melbourne, little did she do justice to the virtues of his preceptor ; she knew not, that one proof of real penitence, one repentant tear, one agonizing and remorseful sigh from his unhappy mother, would have more weight with Aubrey Melbourne, and the pupil of Mr Evelyn, than the imposing sound of a title and the pomp of situation ; that his mother, convinced of the error of her ways, would be more welcome, poor, destitute, and forlorn, to his bosom, than if she stopped at his door in her carriage, and presumed to hope for that respect from rank, which he had been accustomed to pay to virtue only.

Emily continued to hope, and Lorimer, by his expressions of gratitude and love, to keep alive those hopes ; when an express arrived, informing him that his father

was no more, and Mrs Villars saw her lover at last Lord Cardonnel !

But while she was daily expecting that he would offer her in reality the title of wife, which he had so often given her in their hours of domestic happiness, Lord Cardonnel received another letter sealed with black, and she observed him to be violently agitated on the receipt of it ; while, contrary to his usual custom, he did not make her acquainted with the contents of it. Immediately a sick feeling of fear and jealousy took possession of her heart—a feeling, prophetic as it were, of those which succeeded it ; when, after keeping her in suspense three days, Lord Cardonnel summoned up resolution to address her as follow :—

“Your kind attentions, my dearest Mrs Villars, and your long and faithful affection, have so tenderly endeared you to me, and your many charms and talents render you so worthy to grace any situation in life, that it was once my hope never to be parted from you again.”

“Once your hope !” exclaimed Emily, turning pale.

“Yes, *once* my hope ; for, sorry am I, to say, that hope is gone forever !”

“For ever !” cried Mrs Villars, and sunk fainting on the sofa. When she recovered, Lord Cardonnel, as delicately as possible, told her that the woman of his heart, the woman whom he had loved from childhood, had been forced by her father to marry another, though her whole soul was devoted to him, about two years before he became acquainted with Emily ; that his spirits having been greatly depressed by his unhappy attachment, he had diligently courted Mrs Villars’s society, because he found that she only had power to dissipate his gloom ; and the consequence was, an attachment to her nearly as powerful as his former one had been. That, hopeless of ever possessing the object of his first love, he had resolved to offer his hand to her whose kind attentive care had certainly prolonged his life, and in whom he had found a companion whose society was the charm of his existence. But that since his father’s death he had re-

ceived a letter from the brother of his Amelia, enclosing a few lines from herself, informing him that she was a widow, and that, if he remained faithful to his first affection, she was willing to bestow herself and a very considerable fortune on the man of her first affections.

"I thought," added Lord Cardonnel, "that my tender attachment to you, my dear Mrs Villars, had closed my heart against any other impression whatever; but this letter from Mr Morley, and a few lines traced by a hand once so very dear to me, acted like magic on my feelings; I again saw Amelia torn from my arms, bathed in tears, struggling in the cruel grasp of her imperious father, and forced reluctantly to the altar with a man whom she detested. I lived over again the agony of that moment, and then I recollected that I held in my hand the proof of the faithful attachment of that beloved girl, and that I was at liberty, after years of separation, to make her mine forever."

"Say no more, say no more, my lord," cried Mrs Villars, in a voice of suppressed emotion, "obey the virtuous dictates of your heart, for virtuous they are. How can I, the guilty, fallen, disgraced Emily Villars, bear for an instant a competition with the pure object of your first love? She, who was a tender mistress and an irreproachable wife—she, and she only deserves you; go and reward her tried affection! while I endeavor to expiate my crimes by lonely penitence, and bless the gracious being who thus in mercy chastises me."

"Emily, dear Emily," cried Lord Cardonnel, trying to clasp her to his heart, "talk not thus, I beseech you."

But Mrs Villars avoided his embrace, and with an air of repelling dignity replied, "my lord, when shall we set off for England? From this time, we are, I trust, friends for ever—but lovers no more." And the very next day they began their journey homewards.

As soon as they landed, Mrs Villars insisted on Lord Cardonnel's leaving her, that lady Maynel might not have the pain of hearing, that, though returning to marry her, he came attended by a mistress.

"And now, and now," thought Emily, "I will see him

once more, and then, never, never see him again!" The idea was dreadful. Though remorse, and an ever upbraiding conscience, had forbidden her to be happy with Lord Cardonnel, still, as she had by the constant practice of every domestic virtue merited his esteem as well as affection, the respectful tenderness which he consequently felt for her, and openly testified, had restored her in some measure to a little, though a very little, self-complacency; and therefore the prospect of being again left to the horrors of unsoothed, unmitigated remorse, was a blow, independent of her disappointment, which almost overwhelmed her reason; besides, she thought that, had she become a wife, as I before observed, she could have ventured with some courage to implore her son's countenance and affection. But now, a discarded mistress, and forced to owe her support to the lover who discarded her, how could she bear to solicit an interview with Aubrey Melbourne!

Still, she could no longer exist without some intercourse with him; and the first moment that she set her foot on the shores of England, Evelyn and his precious charge met her eye in fancy, wheresoever she turned; and in the hope, though distant, of beholding the lovely boy grown up into the accomplished man, she sought consolation for the loss of Lord Cardonnel.

On leaving her, his lordship hastened immediately to the house of Mr Morley, where Lady Maynel was; but he desired Mrs Villars to expect his return on such a day. That day however arrived, but Lord Cardonnel came not, nor wrote; and after enduring a state of suspense and expectation for two days more, Mrs Villars was painfully surprised one morning, by being informed that Lady Cardonnel wished to speak to her.

"Lady Cardonnel!" exclaimed Emily, starting from her seat, and fancying that Lord Cardonnel was already married, and that his *bride* was below; but recollecting herself, she concluded that it was his lordship's mother who wished to see her, and she desired her to be introduced.

Lady Cardonnel, a woman of high fashion, in dress, in manner, and in morals, entered the room with the freedom of an old acquaintance ; and, running up to Emily, kissed her in a most affectionate manner, and told her she had really longed for the pleasure of being introduced to her.

Emily blushed, and recoiled from her new acquaintance almost with disgust. She felt that *she* could not have courted the acquaintance of *her* son's mistress ; that *she* could not have affectionately embraced the guilty companion of a child of hers ; and though bent down by the consciousness of her own frailty, she could not have endured to know that her son was living in an illicit connexion.

Not noticing her confusion, or her coldness, Lady Cardonnel, pressing her hand, exclaimed, " Now I see you, Mrs Villars, I do not wonder at my son's constant attachment to you, nor at the jealousy of a certain person." Emily started, and Lady Cardonnel smiled, and went on thus ; " I dare say you expected to see Cardonnel instead of me ?"

" I did, indeed."

" And he was coming, I assure you ; but Lady Maynel, by dint of interrogation finding out whither he was coming, threw herself into hysterics, and vowed that if ever he saw you again she would never see him more."

Emily turned very pale and faint, but she begged Lady Cardonnel to go on.

" For my part," continued Lady Cardonnel, " I wished my son to take her at her word, and see you again, in order that he might see her no more, for I assure you he has changed for the worse ; time has not laid so gentle a hand on Lady Maynel as it has done on *you*, Mrs Villars ; the advantage is all on your side, believe me."

" Lady Maynel has one advantage over me, madam," replied Emily with mournful solemnity, " which she herself and Lord Cardonnel ought to prize beyond all others."

" And what is that?" asked Lady Cardonnel with surprise.

"Innocence!"

Lady Cardonnel looked still more surprised, but said nothing; she only patted the top of her snuff-box, and smiled with great meaning; then exclaiming, "You are a dear, comical, solemn soul," she went on with her story.

"Cardonnel, poor dupe, thinking Lady Maynel's hysterics a proof of the tenderness of her heart, and not of the irritability of her temper, promised not to see you again for some time to come; but told her, he owed you so many obligations that he must be allowed to visit you occasionally, and pay you the attention and respect which you deserve; and I, in a desperate rage, told him he would be a nasty ungrateful wretch indeed if he completely sacrificed you to a woman who might not perhaps love him as well as you did. I protest I thought she would have killed me! and *innocence*, my dear Mrs Villars, was, as personified by her, so monstrously ugly, that Cardonnel must have a terrible taste if he thought it made Lady Maynel at that moment prettier than you. I heard no more; for a 'my dearest Amelia,' from Cardonnel, pronounced in a tragedy tone, made me quite sick, and I ran out of the room. In a little while he came to me and told me that he had pacified the tigress, as I call her, and she had consented not to exact a promise that he should never see you more, on condition that he did not keep his 'appointment and come and see you now; therefore he desired me to call on you, and I am come to express to you in person, how much I and our whole family think ourselves obliged to you for that attentive care, that incessant watchfulness, to which Lord Cardonnel protests he owes his life."

"I claim no merit, madam, for what I did," said Emily; "Lord Cardonnel's life was then necessary to the comfort of mine."

"You are a charming creature!" answered Lady Cardonnel, "and I am sure my son would have been much happier with you for a mistress, than with that tigress for a wife; and upon my word, my dear Mrs Villars, if

Cardonnel should venture to visit you now and then, I am not sure that we shall not see the Viscountess Cardonnel arraigned for wilful murder!"

"Believe me, madam," gravely replied Mrs Villars, "that Lord Cardonnel will not visit me now and then; for I have a greater objection to receive his visits than Lady Cardonnel can ever have that he should pay them, and it was my fixed resolution to see him only once more, when we last parted; prudence and propriety both forbid us to meet."

"Alas, poor Cardonnel!" cried his mother. "However, my dear, that gentle, sweet manner of yours makes me endure prudence in you, though I could not bear viragoish insolence—innocence I mean—in Lady Maynel, and I commend your delicacy and discretion. And now for business. As Lord Cardonnel's mother, I conjure you to accept this as a faint testimony of the sense which his whole family has of what he owes you." So saying, she laid a parchment on the table, and telling Emily she should see her again, she kissed her cheek, ran down stairs, jumped into her carriage, and drove away.

Mrs Villars opened the parchment, and found it a deed of settlement on herself for life, and to so large an amount that she was ashamed to accept it. But in vain did she write to Lady Cardonnel on the subject; all remonstrance was vain; and Emily wished, though she dared not expect, that, some day or other, her son would enable her to exempt herself from this painful pecuniary obligation.

Eleven years had now elapsed since Dorville (now General Dorville) had mourned the loss of Emily, the only woman whom he ever really loved; and still no second attachment filled up the void which she had left in his heart, nor had time at all alleviated the resentment which he felt against her for having left him, and at the same moment given a mortal blow to his love and vanity. Indeed the blow to the latter was so great, that Dorville, fearing to encounter the raillery of his acquaintance, over whom in affairs of gallantry he had so often triumphed, rarely frequented the societies of which he had once been

the ornament ; and, a prey to disappointed passion and pride, he sought refuge from his feelings so often in intoxication, that the once fascinating seducer was now lost in the bloated midnight reveller ; and while in the morning, with shaking hand and almost tottering knees, he lounged along the streets of Dublin or London, a mournful example of premature decay, at night he rose from table armed with false fire, to kill at the theatres or the opera that time which he could no longer enjoy ; and then returned to the tavern to lose his yet remaining reason in drunkenness, and to be carried to bed lifeless as the clod of the valley.

One evening, while he was carelessly lounging in the lobby at Drury-lane theatre, a lady whose face was nearly hidden by a long veil, passed him hastily, and by her air and form, reminded him of Emily Villars—of that woman whom he had for years vainly wished to see and reproach with her perfidy. The bare suspicion that the lady whom he saw was Emily, roused him from the debility of drunkenness, and left him only its irritation ; when just as he was going to follow her, he overheard one gentleman say to another,

“ Did you see that woman ? ”

“ Yes ; who is she ? she is very beautiful.”

“ Ah ! she is beautiful still, though turned forty. It is Mrs Villars, as she calls herself, the divorced wife of —.”

Dorville stayed to hear no more ; but, rushing through the lobby, he overtook the unhappy object of his search just as she was going to enter a very elegant carriage. Then, seizing her rudely by the arm, regardless of every one present, he dragged her back into the lobby ; and, while pale and trembling she shuddered in his grasp, he loaded her with the bitterest revilings, and called down curses on her head. At last his passion grew so outrageous, and even her life seemed so much in danger from his violence, that she exclaimed in terror, “ Oh, heavens ! is there no one who will protect me ? ”

“ I will, though I die for it,” exclaimed a pale, sickly

looking young man, darting through the gathering crowd, and receiving on his arm the blow which the half frantic Dorville was aiming at his trembling victim.

"You! poor stripling! you!" cried Dorville (foaming with passion as the determined youth endeavored to force her from his hold,) "'Sdeath, sir! who are you! and by what right do you interfere?"

"By what right! what right!" echoed the young man, apparently struggling to keep down a variety of indignant feelings laboring in his bosom; while, agonized by contending passions, Mrs Villars earnestly gazed on her pale and agitated champion. But Dorville, again grasping her arm with cruel violence, renewed his abuse of her, and his threats of her defender.

"This is too much to bear," cried the youth; "Villain! unhand her this moment! or dread—"

"Dread what?" replied Dorville with a sneer; "dread the force of thy arm, thou puny hero?"

"General Dorville," replied he, approaching him and speaking in a very low and faltering tone, "you reproach me with the weakness of my frame; know, sir, that my feeble infancy was robbed of a mother's care; a villain lured her from my father's arms!"

"What is that to me, sir?" exclaimed the general; "you are an impertinent, meddling scoundrel, and I demand satisfaction!"

"You shall have it, sir," returned the stranger; "I will meet you when and where you please." Then in a distinct but faint voice he added, "My name is Aubrey Melbourne, sir."

At the sound of that name, Dorville started back with horror and consternation; and Mrs Villars, uttering a loud and dreadful shriek, sunk down in a swoon at the feet of her deserted child.

"Mr Melbourne! cried General Dorville, "any other man I could meet; but you—no, no—it is impossible!" So saying, he rushed through the crowd and disappeared.

In the meanwhile, some women who were passing, administered remedies to Mrs Villars; and young Melbourne,

straining her fondly to his bosom as she recovered, said in a whisper, "He is gone—he has left you to my care ; and with my consent, I will never, never part with you more !"

"Oh ! my child ! my child !" cried Emily, hanging round his neck, "how little I have deserved—"

"Hush !" replied he ; "this is no place for conversation ; let me remove you hence."

At this moment a servant appeared, saying, "Mrs Villars's carriage stops the way ;" and Melbourne immediately hurried her through the crowd ; but drawing back with a tone and gesture that spoke daggers to the heart of his mother, he exclaimed ; "No—I cannot enter that carriage ;" and ordered it to drive off. Then, seeing his own at some little distance, he assisted Mrs Villars into it, and jumped in after her himself.

He found his mother had relapsed into a state of insensibility ; and the carriage had reached his house, and she was laid on the bed in the apartment formerly her own, before she recovered to a consciousness of her situation.

A loud and agonized shriek on her recovery proclaimed that she recognised her long deserted apartment ; but at this moment of horror and remorse, her pious and affectionate child presented himself before her.

"Am I not in a dream?" she cried ; "Can I, can I be in—" She could not go on.

"You are in your own house," he answered, kissing her hand ; "you have been dreaming, and the dream has been a long and painful one ; but it is past, and you now wake, I trust, to real happiness !"

A tide of various and discordant feelings rushed in upon the conscious mother, almost too weighty for her to endure and live. "My child ! my child ! can you—can you forgive me?" she exclaimed.

"Forgive you ! Do you expect a very implacable judge in the pupil of Mr Evelyn ? Would he were alive to see this day !"

"He is dead, then !" faltered out Mrs Villars ; and for

several minutes they were both too much oppressed to speak. At length Melbourne, recovering himself, endeavored to divert his mother's attention by telling his own short story. He told her, that on his father's death, who had no children by his second marriage, he had found himself uncontrolled master of a large fortune, and had resolved, if possible, to find his mother, and lure her back to the paths of virtue; that her change of name had misled him in his pursuit, and he had nearly given over his search as hopeless, when the same chance which acquainted Dorville that the lady who passed him in the lobby was Mrs Villars, informed him that it was his long-lost-mother; and he followed her nearly as soon as Dorville, but was impeded in his progress by the crowd.

"But now," he cried, "I have found you, and we part no more; for, O my mother! if there be any ties that are likely to separate us—for your sake, for my sake, break them I conjure you!"

"Whatever had been my ties," returned Mrs Villars, blushing, "this moment should have forever annulled them; but Lord Cardonnel, for whom I left Mr Dorville, is just married, after having made for me an ample provision for life—"

"Which now you can restore to him untouched," eagerly interrupted Melbourne, "as all my fortune is at your disposal, and General Dorville will not, I trust, trouble us with his visits."

It was then settled that Mrs Villars should reside with her son at his country seat, and orders to prepare for their leaving London were immediately issued.

In a short time, Mrs Villars, saw herself once more mistress of the house where she had given birth to her son, and where also she had madly deserted him; while the image of her once fond and deeply injured husband incessantly haunted her; and her heart being torn by mixed and contending emotions, it was a long time before she could prevail on herself to leave her room, or even let into her apartment the light of day. At length, however, the soothing attentions of her son, and her con-

sciousness that her repentance was not only agonizing but lasting, restored her in some measure to composure ; though, while she contemplated Aubrey's pale cheek, and the delicacy of his frame, she reflected with the most painful self-reproach, that, had she not forsaken him, he might have been as healthy as her anxious affection wished him to be. *Happy*, she thought, he might still be ; at least, as happy as the consciousness of a mother's disgrace could allow him to be ; but she soon perceived that he was not happy, though he always professed himself to her to have no wish ungratified, now he had found his mother.

"*A quelque chose le malheur est bon*," says the proverb ; and the truth of this, young Melbourne had experienced ; though the cruel desertion of his mother had exposed his frame to many dangers, and his health to serious injury, it had been the means of benefiting his mind.

Mr Evelyn was the vicar of the parish, a young man (as I have before observed) of exemplary piety and virtue, and who was indeed, in his practice, the village preacher so admirably described by Goldsmith ; and having always beheld with compassion the little Aubrey Melbourne's deserted infancy, he soon began to love him not only for the child's sake, but for the sake of his mother ; and when he was old enough to learn, he took such pleasure in instructing him, that he gave him daily lessons at his own house.

Mr Melbourne had suffered his son, on pretence that the country was good for his health, to remain at his nurse's cottage, even after he was old enough to demand the attendance of a preceptor ; but at length, being ashamed of his neglect, he sent orders for Aubrey's removal to a public school. But against this Mr Evelyn warmly remonstrated ; and as he at the same time offered for a small sum to take him into his house, and undertake to fit him for college himself, his objections were attended to, and his services accepted ; and Aubrey Melbourne became, in consequence, the happy inmate of the parsonage.

Nor was Evelyn less happy to receive the child under his roof, than he to come to him—for was he not the child of Emily Villars !

“ Dear child, I will be a father to you !” cried Evelyn, catching him to his heart ; and as he said so, tears of mingled pleasure and pain trickled down his manly cheek.

Not many month’s after, the circumstance of Emily’s visit to — took place ; and her watch and seals being in the custody of Mr Evelyn, were deposited in his cabinet with a lock of her hair, the only memorial of her which he had allowed himself to keep ; and some of my readers at least will not be surprised to hear, that Mr Evelyn took care to wind up this watch every night. True, he did not want to use it ; but he persuaded himself that it was good for the watch, and he did not choose to examine his motives very narrowly.

From the day on which this watch arrived (as I have before observed) he taught Aubrey to remember his mother in his prayers ; and also foreseeing that the peculiar circumstances of Mrs Villars’ situation might one day call for some instances of exertion and forbearance on the part of her son, he took great pains to impress on Aubrey’s mind the highest sense of filial duty, and to convince him that no unworthiness on the part of a parent could exonerate the child from the most scrupulous observance of the virtues of filial piety, and that no sacrifice for the sake of a parent ought to be scrupled by a virtuous child.

These lessons took deep root in the heart of young Melbourne ; and when Mr Evelyn informed him of his mother’s situation, told him the story of her visit to —, shewed him her gift to him, and, in short, told him all particulars relating to her—after the first burst of indignant sensibility had subsided, he felt a sort of romantic ardor to find her out, and endeavor to reclaim her ; and while he asked his nurse, who lived near him, to tell him every particular of his infancy, and to inform him of all the instances which she could recollect of her fondness

for him, he secretly vowed to be to her an affectionate protector, whenever the obscurity in which she was involved, should, by his exertions, be removed.

But filial love was not sufficient to shield his heart against the admittance of a tenderer passion ; and just before his father died, he had learned to sigh in secret for the daughter of a very opulent man who resided on an estate which joined to Mr Melbourne's.

Most men, when they become possessed, as Aubrey Melbourne did as soon as his father died, of an ample fortune, would have supposed themselves worthy to address the daughter of any man not superior in rank ; but such was Aubrey Melbourne's diffidence of his own merit, such his painful consciousness of the sickliness of his appearance, that though he had considerable personal attractions, and a mildly interesting grace of manner peculiar to himself, he dared not make known his affection to the object of it, from a conviction that he was doomed to sigh for her in vain. But his attachment was too visible to escape the eyes either of the young lady or her father, and each beheld it with delight ; and Mr Ellesmere, in expectation that young Melbourne would soon be the declared lover of his daughter, received very coldly the proposals of a gentleman for her, not quite equal to the former in present possessions. But Melbourne would never have had courage to declare himself, had not a little circumstance occurred, which at once unveiled the state of his own heart to Miss Ellesmere, and made her heart known to him.

One evening that he was drinking tea at Mr Ellesmere's, a busy and prying neighbor came in and congratulated Miss Ellesmere on her approaching marriage. Clara blushed, and Aubrey Melbourne turned pale ; while the lady went on to mention as the happy man, the lately rejected lover ; and Melbourne, deeming Clara's confusion as a confirmation of the report, suddenly fell back in his chair, to all appearance dead.

Terrified, beyond every consideration but that of Melbourne's danger, Miss Ellesmere rent the air with her

screams ; and while remedies were administered to the insensible youth, her arm supported his head, while her warm but trembling lip was ever and anon pressed to his cold temples ; and when he at last recovered his senses, her eye met his with an expression of joyful but tearful tenderness, whose meaning not even he could mistake. "Dear Aubrey !" cried Ellesmere, "what was it that overset you thus ?" Aubrey blushed, and turned his fine eyes full of meaning first on Clara, then on the officious neighbor, and slowly left the room. Ellesmere followed him ; and as he was mounting his horse, declaring himself unable to stay, he shook him by the hand, and whispered him, "I see the state of your heart ; and my girl is yours, both heart and hand ; let us see you to-morrow to dinner, and if you can bring her to confession, I hope before long to have the honor of calling you son in law."

This abrupt but welcome declaration almost overpowered the weak spirits of Melbourne, and, bursting into tears, he could not for a few minutes recover his speech ; but pressing Ellesmere's hand, and uttering a "God bless you !" from the very bottom of his soul, he hastened home, not to sleep, but lie and meditate on his happy expectations.

The next morning, before he rose, an express from London arrived, sent by his agent there, whom he had employed to endeavor to learn some tidings of his long lost mother ; and the messenger brought a letter informing him that she had been seen in London at the theatre, in a private box, and alone, at the representation of "The Stranger ;" and that there, probably, he would see her himself. This was information to put all Melbourne's virtue to the test. It was his duty, he thought, to set off immediately in search of his deluded parent ; but then a dearer duty called him to Mr Ellesmere's ; then again, on the contrary, how could he venture to go thither and contract an engagement, inconsistent, perhaps, with the sacred duties which he was about to enter upon with regard to his mother ?

These various and discordant duties and feelings agitated him for some time; at length filial piety conquered, and he contented himself with writing a hasty note to Mr Ellesmere, and one evidently bearing marks of great agitation of mind; informing him that sudden and important business had called him to London, and forbade him to profit, at present, by the welcome and flattering assurances which Mr Ellesmere had given him; and having despatched this note, he set off for the metropolis; where, at the theatre, during the temporary absence of the friend who knew his mother personally, and attended Melbourne in his search, chance discovered her to him, and produced the scene described in the foregoing pages.

The circumstances which attended that scene had deepened very powerfully the interest which Aubrey Melbourne had long felt for his unhappy parent. I am well aware that what we call *natural affection*, is chiefly in human beings the result of habit, and a series of care, tenderness, mutual kindness, and good offices; still, Melbourne had accustomed himself so long to think of his mother as an object of interest to him during his future life, had so often heard his father's neglect blamed as the cause of her delinquency, and had his mind so imbued with her idea by Evelyn, that his heart was prepared to receive her with the tenderness of a child; and when he beheld her terrified and insulted by the fatal cause of all her disgrace, and saw himself at once her protector from danger and from insult, her power over him became immediately secured, her ascendancy irresistible; and, following the impulse of his feelings, he carried her in triumph to his own house—nay, promised to consider her as his mistress, and never to part from her again, before he recollected how little such an arrangement and such a promise suited his attachment to Miss Ellesmere, and his hope of being united to her.

It was not till he had taken leave of his mother for the night, that the image of Clara, and what had passed between him and Mr Ellesmere, occurred to his recollec-

tion ; but then it recurred with all its force, and chilled with agony the glow of self-approbation and happiness which had so lately flushed his pale cheek.

He had just sworn to his mother, that she should henceforward be his constant companion ; that his presence should always fortify her against any future lapse from virtue ; and his time be devoted to the welcome task of reconciling her to the virtuous details of a life of privacy and active benevolence. Yet, though he had done this, he knew that he was bound in honor to solicit the hand of Miss Ellesmere ; and he also knew—dreadful consideration to the heart of a son ! that his mother was not a fit companion for his wife ! He saw himself, therefore, under the mortifying necessity of depriving his mother of the consoling situation which he had promised her, or of resigning all hope of possessing the woman whom he loved !

And to which decision did virtue urge him ? Could the mother who had violated all her duties to him, to society, and to her husband, deserve that he should sacrifice to her the virtuous affection of his heart, and perhaps the happiness of the woman whom he loved ? Surely not. And he could make his mother independent, allow her a comfortable income, and settle her in a house within three or four miles of his own.

“ It was absurd in me,” said he aloud, “ to hesitate a moment, or make myself uneasy—my mother cannot, ought not to expect any more from me ; all other virtues are not to be lost in that of filial duty ! ”

But then again, he recollected that the filial duty which he had to perform was of a peculiar nature ; it was not only a mother whom he had to support, but a frail being whom he had to keep in the newly recovered path of virtue, and a penitent whom he had to console by unremitting and pious attentions, for the remorse with which she was tormented ; one, too, whom he had promised never to forsake, but to let her be the first object of his tender care ! And how was the proper fulfilment of these obligations consistent with his forming the new

and tender ties of a husband and a father? How was it consistent with his entering into an engagement, one of the first conditions of which must be, that he should send his mother from his house; far from that anxious and watchful eye which was to preserve her from any new temptation to vice? for he knew that no woman could, no woman ought to sacrifice propriety to love, so far as to consent to marry him, with the prospect of having his mother for her companion.

Alas! he soon found that there can be no compromise with duty; that, if he wished to perform his duties correctly as a son, he must surrender his own gratification to effect this virtuous exertion; and, after earnestly wishing that his friend Evelyn was alive to keep up his fainting courage by his advice and approbation, he laid himself down to rest, resolved to prove himself an exemplary child, even to the sacrifice of all his fond hopes of being blest as a husband.

The next morning, he conducted his mother to his country seat; and it is no wonder, now I have detailed these circumstances in his life, that Melbourne's countenance and manner, when there, should prove to Mrs Villars that her son was far from happy. Indeed, he had received a letter since his arrival in the country, from Mr Ellesmere, which was alone sufficient to call forth all the keen sensibilities of his nature.

Neither Ellesmere nor Clara were satisfied with the hasty letter which Melbourne had sent them. Clara, knowing that her father had rashly revealed to Melbourne what he very justly supposed to be the state of her heart, thought that delicacy, and the respect due to her feelings, ought to have suggested to Melbourne the propriety of not suffering her to remain an hour longer unpossessed of certain proofs that her passion was returned; and therefore, the letter of apology ought to have been accompanied by one to her, containing an explicit declaration of love; and Mr Ellesmere was of the same opinion; consequently, they were neither of them in a favorable disposition of mind towards Melbourne, when they heard

that he was returned home, and had brought with him his mother as the future mistress of his house.

Clara heard the news with silent consternation, and her father with violent resentment. Clara endeavored to appease him by saying that their information might not be *correct*; that Mrs Villars might be come merely as a visiter; and she had no doubt that Melbourne would explain every thing to their satisfaction. But she could persuade him to delay writing to Melbourne only till the next day; and it was as follows;—

“SIR,

“Is it true that Mrs Villars is going to reside with you, and that you have told your servants to consider her as their future mistress? If it be, you must suppose that your visits here in future must be considered as *in-sults*, as Mrs Villars can never be a fit companion for my daughter.

R. ELLESMERE.”

To this letter Melbourne returned the following answer;—

“DEAR SIR,

“Could you witness the misery which I have experienced from perusing your letter, pity would be your only feeling towards me. But, whatever may be the sentiments which I am now so wretched as to excite in you and Miss Ellesmere, I shall always feel towards her and you the same devoted attachment and sincere esteem which I have long entertained for you both. But a duty of a most imperious nature forces me to a step which must, I am well convinced, forever shut your doors against me. My mother, my penitent mother, will, henceforward, be the mistress of my house; and to her I make the sacrifice of all my hopes of happiness on earth, unless I can find happiness in the certainty of fulfilling my duty.

“Believe me, whether happy or miserable,

“Ever devotedly, Miss Ellesmere’s and your’s,

“AUBREY MELBOURNE.”

Clara read this letter with mixed feelings. Though she felt personally aggrieved by Melbourne’s conduct,

she viewed with admiration the filial piety which dictated it ; while her father, conceiving that Mrs Villars deserved no attention at all from her son, looked on it as a mere scheme to get rid of the sort of engagement which he had, as it were, forced him to make with his daughter ; and bitterly repenting the declaration which he had made to Melbourne, and his own and his parental pride being severely wounded, he wrote the following answer ;—

“ SIR,

“ I had just refused a most excellent match for my daughter, only the day before you paid us your last visit ; and this I did from an idea that Clara preferred you, and that you intended to pay your addresses to her. But your conduct sufficiently proves that I did not *know* you, and that my confidence in you has been ill-placed ; I have, therefore, written to the gentleman whose addresses I refused, *retracting* my refusal ; and Miss Ellesmere, urged by my entreaties, and by the suggestions of wounded pride and sensibility, has consented to receive his visits, and will look on him as her future husband.

“ Wishing you all possible happiness with the *virtuous companion* whom you have chosen,

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ R. ELLESMERE.”

Some weeks had elapsed since Melbourne had received this cruel letter ; and Mrs Villars had vainly endeavored to find out the cause of his sadness and increased indisposition, when one of the maid servants came in after dinner on some errand to Mrs Villars, and asked her whether she had seen the fine carriages go by.

“ No ; what fine carriages ?”

“ Oh, ma'am, such a sight of them ! They are the relations of the gentleman who is to marry Miss Ellesmere ; and they are all come to his house, and the wedding is to take place in a fortnight ; and there are to be such grand doings ! we shall see the fireworks from our windows !”

Aubrey Melbourne, who was reading at the window,

suddenly dropped his book, and staggered out of the room; while Mrs Villars, terrified and surprised, followed, and found him fallen down in a fit in his own dressing room. When he recovered, he assured his mother he was often seized in that manner, and begged to be left alone.

But Mrs Villars could not help suspecting that his illness had some relation with what the servant had said, and she immediately endeavored to find out from the servants whether their young master had ever been talked of for Miss Ellesmere; but they had never heard such a thing surmised; still, she could not give up the idea; and seeing on her son's countenance when they met in the evening, strong marks of sadness, she was sure that he concealed from her some secret fatal to his peace. The only person in the house likely to be at all in Melbourne's confidence, was the old butler, who had lived in the family many years, and was the only servant known to her whom Melbourne, from motives of delicacy, had not parted with on her entering his house; but old Arthur he could not prevail on himself to part with; he therefore contented himself with recommending to him to behave to his mother, for *his* sake, if not for *hers*, with every possible respect. Still, the old man's feelings of virtuous indignation burst forth when he saw Mrs Villars, leaning on her son's arm, get out of the carriage; and exclaiming—"A vile hussey! I can't bear to look at her!" he ran and shut himself up in his pantry as she passed, resolving to feign illness to escape waiting at table that day. But so many days passed before Mrs Villars was well and composed enough to come down stairs, that old Arthur had sufficient time to conquer his angry feelings before he saw Mrs Villars, whom Melbourne took care he should see first *alone*, lest the sight of him should affect his mother very powerfully, and make the presence of the other servants at that moment improper.

It was well that he had taken this precaution; for as soon as Mrs Villars saw the venerable old man enter the

room, she forgot all her self-command ; and when she saw him turn away and wipe a tear from his eye, as the recollection no doubt of his lost master and past scenes recurred to his mind, she rushed towards him with clasped hands, and conjured him to forget and forgive her past offences.

" I—I hope," replied Arthur in a hoarse tone of voice, " that God and my poor master forgave you, and I will try to do the same as fast as I can." So saying, he hastily left the room, leaving on Mrs Villars's mind a feeling of fear towards him, which made it no easy task for her to address him confidentially. But she felt that the effort ought to be made—that she ought to try to find out her son's secret, and that Arthur probably knew it ; she, therefore, though unwillingly, resolved to apply to him, and her task was soon rendered easy.

The morning after that on which the company to Mr Laurie's had arrived, two or three smart carriages passed the window as Melbourne was at the window and Arthur was busy at the side-board. On seeing them, and particularly as an open carriage passed in which sat a beautiful girl, whose head seemed seduously averted, Mrs Villars observed that Melbourne turned very pale, and sighing deeply, left the room ; while Arthur muttered—"Parading fools ! why need they always contrive to pass our house ?"

" Why should they *not* pass it, my good Arthur ?" said Mrs Villars.

" O, I know why well enough."

" Do you ? Then I wish you would tell me."

" With *my* good will you should have known why long ago ; but now I fear it is too late."

" Too late ! what is too late ?"

" It is too late to prevent Miss Ellesmere's marrying another man ; and there is my poor master dying for her, and she belike for him—for they say that she is main sorry to marry that jinginbob fellow."

" But why did she not marry my son ?"

" O, that I must not tell you !"

"No! Am I, Arthur, am I the cause?"

"Belike you may," answered the blunt old man.

"And my son concealed this from me! What! I suppose his taking me into the house broke off the marriage?"

"Belike it did, and the more is the pity, I say."

"And my generous son gave up his happiness for my sake! Oh, Aubrey, how little did I deserve such conduct from you!" Here she gave way to so violent a burst of anguish that even Arthur pitied her, and pouring out a glass of wine insisted that she should drink it, and not take on so dismally; and when she was recovered, at her very urgent request he told her all he knew respecting his young master and Miss Ellesmere. Indeed he knew every thing that had passed; for, having been with Melbourne when he received Mr Ellesmere's first letter, he had, during the violent paroxysm of feeling which it had thrown him into, ventured to read it himself; and in consequence of having done so he had earnestly conjured his master to part with his mother rather than not marry Miss Ellesmere; and Melbourne, though angry at the old man's disrespect towards Mrs Villars, was so affected by his violent expressions of attachment towards himself, and zeal for his happiness, that he confided to him the whole state of the case, on condition that he kept the affair a secret from his mother.

"But, Arthur, do you think it is *indeed* too late," said Mrs Villars, "to prevent this marriage, as Miss Ellesmere is, you say, attached to Aubrey?"

"Well, but suppose it is not too late—what can you do?"

"What! You shall see, Arthur, what a mother can do to show her gratitude to the best of children!"

On hearing this, Arthur, for the first time since her entrance into the house, condescended to look at her.

"Why, *what* will you do?" said he, almost smiling on her as he spoke.

"Go to Mr Ellesmere."

"And what will you say to him?"

"All my heart dictates."

The old man stood silent for a moment, stroking his gray head, while with the back of his hand he dashed away a tear, and then said, with a sort of a bow, "Shall I go with you, ma'am? I can't think of your going alone; I will just make myself tidy and walk behind you."

"I never thought that I should ever walk behind *her* again," said the old man to himself, "but I believe she is a true penitent." In five minutes more, Arthur being sure that he had seen Mr Ellesmere ride towards home on horseback, Mrs Villars stole out unperceived by her son, having positively refused Arthur's attendance—a refusal which mortified him exceedingly—but he opened the door for her; and, as he used to do in former times, he held the door open till she was out of sight.

Mrs Villars found Mr Ellesmere at home; and, having desired the servant to say a lady wished to see Mr Ellesmere alone, she was soon admitted into his study. When there, she replied to his very respectful address by throwing up her veil, and Mr Ellesmere started on beholding Mrs Villars. But such is female influence, and such the power of beauty (for Mrs Villars was still beautiful,) that though before he saw her Mr Ellesmere bestowed on her every degrading epithet possible, and was convinced that he should not scruple to say *to* her all that he had said *of* her—at the moment he beheld her, his boasted courage failed him, and with awkward complaisance he desired her to be seated.

"Mr Ellesmere," cried she, "you see in me a wretched, penitent, and humbled woman."

"I am glad to hear it, madam," said he, scarcely knowing what he said.

"And my son—my poor son!"

"What of Mr Melbourne, madam?"

"I have just been informed that he is pining away his life in a hopeless attachment to your daughter, and that I am the obstacle to his happiness."

"Really, madam!" replied Mr Ellesmere, "Certainly—yes—there was something going forward; but—"

"Yes, sir, though my son's filial piety led him to conceal the circumstance from me, and he knows nothing of this visit to you, I find that had he not received his guilty mother into his house, it would at this moment have contained a young and virtuous bride! Is this not so sir?"

"Why, madam, I can't say but that the extraordinary step which Mr Melbourne took, at the very moment when I expected him to be the avowed and accepted lover of my daughter, was very unexpected and unwelcome to us both; but as matters were, you must feel that Miss Ellesmere was forced to give up all thoughts of being Mrs Melbourne."

"I understand you, sir; Mr Melbourne's mother is unworthy to associate with his wife—and no one feels the truth more deeply than I do; but sir, is such a son as mine to be sacrificed to such a parent as I am? I am told that Miss Ellesmere prefers my son to the gentleman she is about to marry."

"It is only too true, madam."

"Oh! then, sir, for mercy, and for justice sake, do not conclude the marriage in question. Of the strength of Aubrey's attachment to your daughter I have convincing proofs; and if I am the only obstacle to his success, look on me, sir, as a being who exists not; I am willing to relinquish my son's society for ever; banish me whithersoever you please; exact an oath from me, never, except when I am on my death-bed, or he on his, to see my son again; nay, command me to live where he shall never be able to find me. I care not what I promise, and to what hardships I expose myself, so that I can prevail on you to receive him as your son in law, and give the mansion of his ancestors a mistress more worthy to preside in it than I am; I can only say, make your conditions, and whatever they are I will consent to them."

"Mrs Villars, madam, really I—upon my soul, your offer is a very generous one, and—but you say Mr Melbourne knows nothing of this visit."

"No, sir, nor is he yet aware that I am acquainted with the secret of his heart; but ever since he heard

These various and discordant duties and feelings agitated him for some time; at length filial piety conquered, and he contented himself with writing a hasty note to Mr Ellesmere, and one evidently bearing marks of great agitation of mind; informing him that sudden and important business had called him to London, and forbade him to profit, at present, by the welcome and flattering assurances which Mr Ellesmere had given him; and having despatched this note, he set off for the metropolis; where, at the theatre, during the temporary absence of the friend who knew his mother personally, and attended Melbourne in his search, chance discovered her to him, and produced the scene described in the foregoing pages.

The circumstances which attended that scene had deepened very powerfully the interest which Aubrey Melbourne had long felt for his unhappy parent. I am well aware that what we call *natural affection*, is chiefly in human beings the result of habit, and a series of care, tenderness, mutual kindness, and good offices; still, Melbourne had accustomed himself so long to think of his mother as an object of interest to him during his future life, had so often heard his father's neglect blamed as the cause of her delinquency, and had his mind so imbued with her idea by Evelyn, that his heart was prepared to receive her with the tenderness of a child; and when he beheld her terrified and insulted by the fatal cause of all her disgrace, and saw himself at once her protector from danger and from insult, her power over him became immediately secured, her ascendancy irresistible; and, following the impulse of his feelings, he carried her in triumph to his own house—nay, promised to consider her as its mistress, and never to part from her again, before he recollected how little such an arrangement—and such a promise suited his attachment to Miss Ellesmere, and his hope of being united to her.

It was not till he had taken leave of his mother for the night, that the image of Clara, and what had passed between him and Mr Ellesmere, occurred to his recollec-

tion ; but then it recurred with all its force, and chilled with agony the glow of self-approbation and happiness which had so lately flushed his pale cheek.

He had just sworn to his mother, that she should henceforward be his constant companion ; that his presence should always fortify her against any future lapse from virtue ; and his time be devoted to the welcome task of reconciling her to the virtuous details of a life of privacy and active benevolence. Yet, though he had done this, he knew that he was bound in honor to solicit the hand of Miss Ellesmere ; and he also knew—dreadful consideration to the heart of a son ! that his mother was not a fit companion for his wife ! He saw himself, therefore, under the mortifying necessity of depriving his mother of the consoling situation which he had promised her, or of resigning all hope of possessing the woman whom he loved !

And to which decision did virtue urge him ? Could the mother who had violated all her duties to him, to society, and to her husband, deserve that he should sacrifice to her the virtuous affection of his heart, and perhaps the happiness of the woman whom he loved ? Surely not. And he could make his mother independent, allow her a comfortable income, and settle her in a house within three or four miles of his own.

“ It was absurd in me,” said he aloud, “ to hesitate a moment, or make myself uneasy—my mother cannot, ought not to expect any more from me ; all other virtues are not to be lost in that of filial duty ! ”

But then again, he recollected that the filial duty which he had to perform was of a peculiar nature ; it was not only a mother whom he had to support, but a frail being whom he had to keep in the newly recovered path of virtue, and a penitent whom he had to console by unremitting and pious attentions, for the remorse with which she was tormented ; one, too, whom he had promised never to forsake, but to let her be the first object of his tender care ! And how was the proper fulfilment of these obligations consistent with his forming the new

and tender ties of a husband and a father? How was it consistent with his entering into an engagement, one of the first conditions of which must be, that he should send his mother from his house; far from that anxious and watchful eye which was to preserve her from any new temptation to vice? for he knew that no woman could, no woman ought to sacrifice propriety to love, so far as to consent to marry him, with the prospect of having his mother for her companion.

Alas! he soon found that there can be no compromise with duty; that, if he wished to perform his duties correctly as a son, he must surrender his own gratification to effect this virtuous exertion; and, after earnestly wishing that his friend Evelyn was alive to keep up his fainting courage by his advice and approbation, he laid himself down to rest, resolved to prove himself an exemplary child, even to the sacrifice of all his fond hopes of being blest as a husband.

The next morning, he conducted his mother to his country seat; and it is no wonder, now I have detailed these circumstances in his life, that Melbourne's countenance and manner, when there, should prove to Mrs Villars that her son was far from happy. Indeed, he had received a letter since his arrival in the country, from Mr Ellesmere, which was alone sufficient to call forth all the keen sensibilities of his nature.

Neither Ellesmere nor Clara were satisfied with the hasty letter which Melbourne had sent them. Clara, knowing that her father had rashly revealed to Melbourne what he very justly supposed to be the state of her heart, thought that delicacy, and the respect due to her feelings, ought to have suggested to Melbourne the propriety of not suffering her to remain an hour longer unpossessed of certain proofs that her passion was returned; and therefore, the letter of apology ought to have been accompanied by one to her, containing an explicit declaration of love; and Mr Ellesmere was of the same opinion; consequently, they were neither of them in a favorable disposition of mind towards Melbourne, when they heard

that he was returned home, and had brought with him his mother as the future mistress of his house.

Clara heard the news with silent consternation, and her father with violent resentment. Clara endeavored to appease him by saying that their information might not be *correct*; that Mrs Villars might be come merely as a visiter; and she had no doubt that Melbourne would explain every thing to their satisfaction. But she could persuade him to delay writing to Melbourne only till the next day; and it was as follows;—

“SIR,

“Is it true that Mrs Villars is going to reside with you, and that you have told your servants to consider her as their future mistress? If it be, you must suppose that your visits here in future must be considered as *in-sults*, as Mrs Villars can never be a fit companion for my daughter.

R. ELLESMERE.”

To this letter Melbourne returned the following answer;—

“DEAR SIR,

“Could you witness the misery which I have experienced from perusing your letter, pity would be your only feeling towards me. But, whatever may be the sentiments which I am now so wretched as to excite in you and Miss Ellesmere, I shall always feel towards her and you the same devoted attachment and sincere esteem which I have long entertained for you both. But a duty of a most imperious nature forces me to a step which must, I am well convinced, forever shut your doors against me. My mother, my penitent mother, will, henceforward, be the mistress of my house; and to her I make the sacrifice of all my hopes of happiness on earth, unless I can find happiness in the certainty of fulfilling my duty.

“Believe me, whether happy or miserable,

“Ever devotedly, Miss Ellesmere’s and your’s,

AUBREY MELBOURNE.”

Clara read this letter with mixed feelings. Though she felt personally aggrieved by Melbourne’s conduct,

she viewed with admiration the filial piety which dictated it ; while her father, conceiving that Mrs Villars deserved no attention at all from her son, looked on it as a mere scheme to get rid of the sort of engagement which he had, as it were, forced him to make with his daughter ; and bitterly repenting the declaration which he had made to Melbourne, and his own and his parental pride being severely wounded, he wrote the following answer ;—

“ SIR,

“ I had just refused a most excellent match for my daughter, only the day before you paid us your last visit ; and this I did from an idea that Clara preferred you, and that you intended to pay your addresses to her. But your conduct sufficiently proves that I did not *know* you, and that my confidence in you has been ill-placed ; I have, therefore, written to the gentleman whose addresses I refused, *retracting* my refusal ; and Miss Ellesmere, urged by my entreaties, and by the suggestions of wounded pride and sensibility, has consented to receive his visits, and will look on him as her future husband.

“ Wishing you all possible happiness with the *virtuous companion* whom you have chosen,

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ R. ELLESMERE.”

Some weeks had elapsed since Melbourne had received this cruel letter ; and Mrs Villars had vainly endeavored to find out the cause of his sadness and increased indisposition, when one of the maid servants came in after dinner 'on some errand to Mrs Villars, and asked her whether she had seen the fine carriages go by.

“ No ; what fine carriages ?”

“ Oh, ma'am, such a sight of them ! They are the relations of the gentleman who is to marry Miss Ellesmere ; and they are all come to his house, and the wedding is to take place in a fortnight ; and there are to be such grand doings ! we shall see the fireworks from our windows !”

Aubrey Melbourne, who was reading at the window,

suddenly dropped his book, and staggered out of the room ; while Mrs Villars, terrified and surprised, followed, and found him fallen down in a fit in his own dressing room. When he recovered, he assured his mother he was often seized in that manner, and begged to be left alone.

But Mrs Villars could not help suspecting that his illness had some relation with what the servant had said, and she immediately endeavored to find out from the servants whether their young master had ever been talked of for Miss Ellesmere ; but they had never heard such a thing surmised ; still, she could not give up the idea ; and seeing on her son's countenance when they met in the evening, strong marks of sadness, she was sure that he concealed from her some secret fatal to his peace. The only person in the house likely to be at all in Melbourne's confidence, was the old butler, who had lived in the family many years, and was the only servant known to her whom Melbourne, from motives of delicacy, had not parted with on her entering his house ; but old Arthur he could not prevail on himself to part with ; he therefore contented himself with recommending to him to behave to his mother, for *his* sake, if not for *hers*, with every possible respect. Still, the old man's feelings of virtuous indignation burst forth when he saw Mrs Villars, leaning on her son's arm, get out of the carriage ; and exclaiming—"A vile hussey ! I can't bear to look at her !" he ran and shut himself up in his pantry as she passed, resolving to feign illness to escape waiting at table that day. But so many days passed before Mrs Villars was well and composed enough to come down stairs, that old Arthur had sufficient time to conquer his angry feelings before he saw Mrs Villars, whom Melbourne took care he should see first *alone*, lest the sight of him should affect his mother very powerfully, and make the presence of the other servants at that moment improper.

It was well that he had taken this precaution ; for as soon as Mrs Villars saw the venerable old man enter the

room, she forgot all her self-command ; and when she saw him turn away and wipe a tear from his eye, as the recollection no doubt of his lost master and past scenes recurred to his mind, she rushed towards him with clasped hands, and conjured him to forget and forgive her past offences.

"I—I hope," replied Arthur in a hoarse tone of voice, "that God and my poor master forgave you, and I will try to do the same as fast as I can." So saying, he hastily left the room, leaving on Mrs Villars's mind a feeling of fear towards him, which made it no easy task for her to address him confidentially. But she felt that the effort ought to be made—that she ought to try to find out her son's secret, and that Arthur probably knew it ; she, therefore, though unwillingly, resolved to apply to him, and her task was soon rendered easy.

The morning after that on which the company to Mr Laurie's had arrived, two or three smart carriages passed the window as Melbourne was at the window and Arthur was busy at the side-board. On seeing them, and particularly as an open carriage passed in which sat a beautiful girl, whose head seemed sedulously averted, Mrs Villars observed that Melbourne turned very pale, and sighing deeply, left the room ; while Arthur muttered—"Parading fools ! why need they always contrive to pass our house ?"

"Why should they *not* pass it, my good Arthur ?" said Mrs Villars.

"O, I know why well enough."

"Do you ? Then I wish you would tell me."

"With *my* good will you should have known why long ago ; but now I fear it is too late."

"Too late ! what is too late ?"

"It is too late to prevent Miss Ellesmere's marrying another man ; and there is my poor master dying for her, and she belike for him—for they say that she is main sorry to marry that jingibob fellow."

"But why did she not marry my son ?"

"O, that I must not tell you !"

"No! Am I, Arthur, am I the cause?"

"Belike you may," answered the blunt old man.

"And my son concealed this from me! What! I suppose his taking me into the house broke off the marriage?"

"Belike it did, and the more is the pity, I say."

"And my generous son gave up his happiness for my sake! Oh, Aubrey, how little did I deserve such conduct from you!" Here she gave way to so violent a burst of anguish that even Arthur pitied her, and pouring out a glass of wine insisted that she should drink it, and not take on so dismally; and when she was recovered, at her very urgent request he told her all he knew respecting his young master and Miss Ellesmere. Indeed he knew every thing that had passed; for, having been with Melbourne when he received Mr Ellesmere's first letter, he had, during the violent paroxysm of feeling which it had thrown him into, ventured to read it himself; and in consequence of having done so he had earnestly conjured his master to part with his mother rather than not marry Miss Ellesmere; and Melbourne, though angry at the old man's disrespect towards Mrs Villars, was so affected by his violent expressions of attachment towards himself, and zeal for his happiness, that he confided to him the whole state of the case, on condition that he kept the affair a secret from his mother.

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"What! You shall see, Arthur, what a mother can do to show her gratitude to the best of children!"

On hearing this, Arthur, for the first time since her entrance into the house, condescended to look at her.

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"Mr Ellesmere," cried she, "you see in me a wretched, penitent, and humbled woman."

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"And my son—my poor son!"

"What of Mr Melbourne, madam?"

"I have just been informed that he is pining away his life in a hopeless attachment to your daughter, and that I am the obstacle to his happiness."

"Really, madam!" replied Mr Ellesmere, "Certainly—yes—there was something going forward; but—"

"Yes, sir, though my son's filial piety led him to conceal the circumstance from me, and he knows nothing of this visit to you, I find that had he not received his guilty mother into his house, it would at this moment have contained a young and virtuous bride! Is this not so sir?"

"Why, madam, I can't say but that the extraordinary step which Mr Melbourne took, at the very moment when I expected him to be the avowed and accepted lover of my daughter, was very unexpected and unwelcome to us both; but as matters were, you must feel that Miss Ellesmere was forced to give up all thoughts of being Mrs Melbourne."

"I understand you, sir; Mr Melbourne's mother is unworthy to associate with his wife—and no one feels the truth more deeply than I do; but sir, is such a son as mine to be sacrificed to such a parent as I am? I am told that Miss Ellesmere prefers my son to the gentleman she is about to marry."

"It is only too true, madam."

"Oh! then, sir, for mercy, and for justice sake, do not conclude the marriage in question. Of the strength of Aubrey's attachment to your daughter I have convincing proofs; and if I am the only obstacle to his success, look on me, sir, as a being who exists not; I am willing to relinquish my son's society for ever; banish me whithersoever you please; exact an oath from me, never, except when I am on my death-bed, or he on his, to see my son again; nay, command me to live where he shall never be able to find me. I care not what I promise, and to what hardships I expose myself, so that I can prevail on you to receive him as your son in law, and give the mansion of his ancestors a mistress more worthy to preside in it than I am; I can only say, make your conditions, and whatever they are I will consent to them."

"Mrs Villars, madam, really I—upon my soul, your offer is a very generous one, and—but you say Mr Melbourne knows nothing of this visit."

"No, sir, nor is he yet aware that I am acquainted with the secret of his heart; but ever since he heard

that Miss Ellesmere's marriage is to take place in a few days, he has not spoken without great effort, nor has he slept or eaten since. In short, I see that his life will fall a victim to his mistaken sense of duty; for surely, sir, I have not *deserved* such an instance of duty from him!"

"Why, really, madam, I must say, to be honest, that Mr Melbourne's conduct appeared to me such a work of supererogation that I believed he had no great attachment to my daughter, and brought you home to get rid of the business; but it seems I was mistaken, and——"

"And you will take pity on him, sir?"

"Why, I am much disposed to do it; and as to the reported marriage, that is entirely a mistake; the sister of Mr Laurie, my daughter's lover, is going to be married, and it is on that account that these grand preparations have taken place; but I have not yet been able to prevail on Clara to fix any time for her marriage, and indeed Mr Laurie has very little hope of success."

"O, sir," cried Mrs Villars, "you have spoken such comfort to me!"

"But let us consult my daughter, she is only in the next room." So saying, he opened the door, and called his daughter. Mrs Villars involuntarily drew back, and would have retired. It was long since she had been admitted into the presence of a woman of unblemished virtue; and overcome with the consciousness of her guilt, she stood abashed in the presence of her whom she hoped would be the wife of her son.

"My dear," said Mr Ellesmere, "you see Mr Melbourne's mother, who comes on business of——" He said no more; for Clara, overwhelmed with a variety of emotions, sunk back in a chair, and burst into tears.

"Miss Ellesmere," said Mrs Villars mournfully, "no motive less powerful than fear for the life of my son, and care of his happiness, could have urged me, disgraced and wretched as I am, to obtrude myself into your presence. But I come to ask my son's life from you! Listen to me, I conjure you! See," she continued, dropping on her knees, "see a mother at your feet, im-

ploring you to restore her only child to health and happiness ! O, if there must be a victim, I will be that victim ! No matter what becomes of me—I feel I am unworthy of such happiness as the enjoyment of Aubrey’s constant society would give me.” Here she paused, overcome by the violence of her emotions ; and Clara, greatly moved, had not power to interrupt her.

“ You must know, Clara,” said Mr Ellesmere, “ that Mrs Villars, unknown to her son, has come hither very generously to propose to leave his house for ever, and retire to some place at a distance from him and you, if you will but consent to marry him ; as she has discovered that his attachment to you (though for her sake, and that he might do his duty by her, he wished to conquer it,) is as strong as ever, and is destroying his health ; Now what say you, my dear ? On the conditions which Mrs Villars mentions, I am very willing that you should marry Mr Melbourne, and I am sure he has an advocate in your heart.”

“ He has indeed, sir,” replied Clara ; “ but do you and Mrs Villars imagine I am so little able to appreciate Mr Melbourne’s worth, as to be incapable of imitating his virtue and her generosity ? What, sir ! shall I insult Mr Melbourne so far as to make it the condition of our marriage, that he shall turn his mother out of doors ? No—from the bottom of my soul I love and venerate his filial piety ; and so dearly do I esteem him, that I promise never to be another’s ; but on such conditions, never, never will I be his ; nay, I should despise him if he wished me to accede to them !”

“ Miss Ellesmere,” cried Mrs Villars eagerly, “ I love, I adore you for your scruples, but beware how you drive me to desperation ; remember, that I know myself, undeserving as I am, to be the only obstacle to my son’s happiness—and such a son—”

Clara shuddered and turned pale at the horrible insinuation contained in these words ; but before she could reply to them, Aubrey Melbourne himself rushed into the room ; and expecting to see no one but Mr Ellesmere

and tender ties of a husband and a father? How was it consistent with his entering into an engagement, one of the first conditions of which must be, that he should send his mother from his house; far from that anxious and watchful eye which was to preserve her from any new temptation to vice? for he knew that no woman could, no woman ought to sacrifice propriety to love, so far as to consent to marry him, with the prospect of having his mother for her companion.

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“ I had just refused a most excellent match for my daughter, only the day before you paid us your last visit ; and this I did from an idea that Clara preferred you, and that you intended to pay your addresses to her. But your conduct sufficiently proves that I did not *know* you, and that my confidence in you has been ill-placed ; I have, therefore, written to the gentleman whose addresses I refused, *retracting* my refusal ; and Miss Ellesmere, urged by my entreaties, and by the suggestions of wounded pride and sensibility, has consented to receive his visits, and will look on him as her future husband.

“ Wishing you all possible happiness with the *virtuous companion* whom you have chosen,

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ R. ELLESMERE.”

Some weeks had elapsed since Melbourne had received this cruel letter ; and Mrs Villars had vainly endeavored to find out the cause of his sadness and increased indisposition, when one of the maid servants came in after dinner 'on some errand to Mrs Villars, and asked her whether she had seen the fine carriages go by.

“ No ; what fine carriages ?”

“ Oh, ma'am, such a sight of them ! They are the relations of the gentleman who is to marry Miss Ellesmere ; and they are all come to his house, and the wedding is to take place in a fortnight ; and there are to be such grand doings ! we shall see the fireworks from our windows !”

Aubrey Melbourne, who was reading at the window,

suddenly dropped his book, and staggered out of the room ; while Mrs Villars, terrified and surprised, followed, and found him fallen down in a fit in his own dressing room. When he recovered, he assured his mother he was often seized in that manner, and begged to be left alone.

But Mrs Villars could not help suspecting that his illness had some relation with what the servant had said, and she immediately endeavored to find out from the servants whether their young master had ever been talked of for Miss Ellesmere ; but they had never heard such a thing surmised ; still, she could not give up the idea ; and seeing on her son's countenance when they met in the evening, strong marks of sadness, she was sure that he concealed from her some secret fatal to his peace. The only person in the house likely to be at all in Melbourne's confidence, was the old butler, who had lived in the family many years, and was the only servant known to her whom Melbourne, from motives of delicacy, had not parted with on her entering his house ; but old Arthur he could not prevail on himself to part with ; he therefore contented himself with recommending to him to behave to his mother, for *his* sake, if not for *hers*, with every possible respect. Still, the old man's feelings of virtuous indignation burst forth when he saw Mrs Villars, leaning on her son's arm, get out of the carriage ; and exclaiming—"A vile hussey ! I can't bear to look at her !" he ran and shut himself up in his pantry as she passed, resolving to feign illness to escape waiting at table that day. But so many days passed before Mrs Villars was well and composed enough to come down stairs, that old Arthur had sufficient time to conquer his angry feelings before he saw Mrs Villars, whom Melbourne took care he should see first *alone*, lest the sight of him should affect his mother very powerfully, and make the presence of the other servants at that moment improper.

It was well that he had taken this precaution ; for as soon as Mrs Villars saw the venerable old man enter the

room, she forgot all her self-command ; and when she saw him turn away and wipe a tear from his eye, as the recollection no doubt of his lost master and past scenes recurred to his mind, she rushed towards him with clasped hands, and conjured him to forget and forgive her past offences.

"I—I hope," replied Arthur in a hoarse tone of voice, "that God and my poor master forgave you, and I will try to do the same as fast as I can." So saying, he hastily left the room, leaving on Mrs Villars's mind a feeling of fear towards him, which made it no easy task for her to address him confidentially. But she felt that the effort ought to be made—that she ought to try to find out her son's secret, and that Arthur probably knew it ; she, therefore, though unwillingly, resolved to apply to him, and her task was soon rendered easy.

The morning after that on which the company to Mr Laurie's had arrived, two or three smart carriages passed the window as Melbourne was at the window and Arthur was busy at the side-board. On seeing them, and particularly as an open carriage passed in which sat a beautiful girl, whose head seemed seduously averted, Mrs Villars observed that Melbourne turned very pale, and sighing deeply, left the room ; while Arthur muttered—"Parading fools ! why need they always contrive to pass our house ?"

"Why should they *not* pass it, my good Arthur ?" said Mrs Villars.

"O, I know why well enough."

"Do you ? Then I wish you would tell me."

"With *my* good will you should have known why long ago ; but now I fear it is too late."

"Too late ! what is too late ?"

"It is too late to prevent Miss Ellesmere's marrying another man ; and there is my poor master dying for her, and she belike for him—for they say that she is main sorry to marry that jingibob fellow."

"But why did she not marry my son ?"

"O, that I must not tell you !"

"No! Am I, Arthur, am I the cause?"

"Belike you may," answered the blunt old man.

"And my son concealed this from me! What! I suppose his taking me into the house broke off the marriage?"

"Belike it did, and the more is the pity, I say."

"And my generous son gave up his happiness for my sake! Oh, Aubrey, how little did I deserve such conduct from you!" Here she gave way to so violent a burst of anguish that even Arthur pitied her, and pouring out a glass of wine insisted that she should drink it, and not take on so dismally; and when she was recovered, at her very urgent request he told her all he knew respecting his young master and Miss Ellesmere. Indeed he knew every thing that had passed; for, having been with Melbourne when he received Mr Ellesmere's first letter, he had, during the violent paroxysm of feeling which it had thrown him into, ventured to read it himself; and in consequence of having done so he had earnestly conjured his master to part with his mother rather than not marry Miss Ellesmere; and Melbourne, though angry at the old man's disrespect towards Mrs Villars, was so affected by his violent expressions of attachment towards himself, and zeal for his happiness, that he confided to him the whole state of the case, on condition that he kept the affair a secret from his mother.

"But, Arthur, do you think it is *indeed* too late," said Mrs Villars, "to prevent this marriage, as Miss Ellesmere is, you say, attached to Aubrey?"

"Well, but suppose it is not too late—what can you do?"

"What! You shall see, Arthur, what a mother can do to show her gratitude to the best of children!"

On hearing this, Arthur, for the first time since her entrance into the house, condescended to look at her.

"Why, *what* will you do?" said he, almost smiling on her as he spoke.

"Go to Mr Ellesmere."

"And what will you say to him?"

"All my heart dictates."

The old man stood silent for a moment, stroking his gray head, while with the back of his hand he dashed away a tear, and then said, with a sort of a bow, "Shall I go with you, ma'am? I can't think of your going alone; I will just make myself tidy and walk behind you."

"I never thought that I should ever walk behind *her* again," said the old man to himself, "but I believe she is a true penitent." In five minutes more, Arthur being sure that he had seen Mr Ellesmere ride towards home on horseback, Mrs Villars stole out unperceived by her son, having positively refused Arthur's attendance—a refusal which mortified him exceedingly—but he opened the door for her; and, as he used to do in former times, he held the door open till she was out of sight.

Mrs Villars found Mr Ellesmere at home; and, having desired the servant to say a lady wished to see Mr Ellesmere alone, she was soon admitted into his study. When there, she replied to his very respectful address by throwing up her veil, and Mr Ellesmere started on beholding Mrs Villars. But such is female influence, and such the power of beauty (for Mrs Villars was still beautiful,) that though before he saw her Mr Ellesmere bestowed on her every degrading epithet possible, and was convinced that he should not scruple to say *to* her all that he had said *of* her—at the moment he beheld her, his boasted courage failed him, and with awkward complaisance he desired her to be seated.

"Mr Ellesmere," cried she, "you see in me a wretched, penitent, and humbled woman."

"I am glad to hear it, madam," said he, scarcely knowing what he said.

"And my son—my poor son!"

"What of Mr Melbourne, madam?"

"I have just been informed that he is pining away his life in a hopeless attachment to your daughter, and that I am the obstacle to his happiness."

"Really, madam!" replied Mr Ellesmere, "Certainly—yes—there was something going forward; but—"

"Yes, sir, though my son's filial piety led him to conceal the circumstance from me, and he knows nothing of this visit to you, I find that had he not received his guilty mother into his house, it would at this moment have contained a young and virtuous bride! Is this not so sir?"

"Why, madam, I can't say but that the extraordinary step which Mr Melbourne took, at the very moment when I expected him to be the avowed and accepted lover of my daughter, was very unexpected and unwelcome to us both; but as matters were, you must feel that Miss Ellesmere was forced to give up all thoughts of being Mrs Melbourne."

"I understand you, sir; Mr Melbourne's mother is unworthy to associate with his wife—and no one feels the truth more deeply than I do; but sir, is such a son as mine to be sacrificed to such a parent as I am? I am told that Miss Ellesmere prefers my son to the gentleman she is about to marry."

"It is only too true, madam."

"Oh! then, sir, for mercy, and for justice sake, do not conclude the marriage in question. Of the strength of Aubrey's attachment to your daughter I have convincing proofs; and if I am the only obstacle to his success, look on me, sir, as a being who exists not; I am willing to relinquish my son's society for ever; banish me whithersoever you please; exact an oath from me, never, except when I am on my death-bed, or he on his, to see my son again; nay, command me to live where he shall never be able to find me. I care not what I promise, and to what hardships I expose myself, so that I can prevail on you to receive him as your son in law, and give the mansion of his ancestors a mistress more worthy to preside in it than I am; I can only say, make your conditions, and whatever they are I will consent to them."

"Mrs Villars, madam, really I—upon my soul, your offer is a very generous one, and—but you say Mr Melbourne knows nothing of this visit."

"No, sir, nor is he yet aware that I am acquainted with the secret of his heart; but ever since he heard

The other reason was, that d'Anglade had received from the count and countess what appeared to him a personal slight. Perhaps, like many other persons who occasionally associate with their superiors, there were times when he saw himself reminded of his inferiority, and the smile of affability suddenly exchanged for the frown of supercilious coldness. D'Anglade had, perhaps, sometimes felt in the circles of the great, as one does in a menagerie of wild beasts, which look so quiet and so good humored at times in their cages, that we are tempted to approach the gratings and endeavor to be familiar with them, when a sudden *coup de patte* forces us to resume our distance, and reminds us smartly enough, of the dangers of presumption. A *coup de patte* like this it is very certain that d'Anglade had received ; and while still smarting under it, it was very natural that he should wish not to expose himself during several days to a repetition of so painful an admonisher ; therefore, the count and countess were forced to leave Paris without them.

They set off on the Monday evening for their country seat, and gave out that they should not return till the following Thursday at night. They carried with them François Gagnard, their chaplain, and all their domestics, except a waiting maid named Formenie, a servant boy, and the four girls who were working embroidery.

The key of the first door of the apartments was entrusted to the waiting maid ; but the chaplain double locked the door of the room in which he slept, and carried the key away with him. It seems that there was no porter to the house, and that the count's servants performed the office of one.

The count and countess returned a day sooner than they were expected ; brought back, it appears, by superstitious terror. Monsieur de Montgommery had found blood on a table cloth and napkin ; and having looked on this circumstance as a bad omen, he resolved, from a foreboding of misfortune, to set off for Paris immediately.

The chaplain, the page, and the valet de chambre, who came on horseback, arrived after their master. The

chaplain found that the door of their common apartment was only pulled to, and not shut, though it had always appeared to be so, during the absence of the count and countess, and though he knew that he had double locked it when he went away, and had carried the key with him. This circumstance, though it was remarked by all the servants, by those who had stayed at Paris, and those who had been to Ville-boisin, was not at the moment taken much notice of ; and the count and countess sat down to supper in one of the lower apartments, where they were in the habit of supping.

They were still at table, when the *Sieur d'Anglade* returned home at eleven o'clock at night, accompanied by the *Abbé de Villars* and the *Abbé de Fleury*, with whom he had supped at the house of the President Robert. He stayed below, to converse with the count and countess ; and some time after, *Madame d'Anglade* came and took part in their conversation ; and every one parted for the night, without mention having been made that any unusual incident had happened.

The next evening the count lodged a complaint or information with the *Sieur Deffeta*, the lieutenant of police, at the *Châtelet*. He declared that during his absence, an absence only of three days, the lock of his strong box had been forced, and that he had been robbed of thirteen bags, each containing a thousand livres in silver money, 11,500 livres in gold, in two pistole pieces, a hundred louis d'ors, new and *au cordon*, (a peculiar kind of coinage) and a necklace of pearls, worth 4,000 livres.

The lieutenant of police, the king's *procureur*, and a commissary, immediately came on the premises. These three officers, having found no fracture in the doors or locks of the apartment, were immediately persuaded that the robbery must have been committed by the assistance of false keys, and by persons residing in the house ; consequently, they concluded that they ought immediately to search all the apartments. The *Sieur d'Anglade* and his wife immediately desired that the search might begin

in their rooms, and Monsieur d'Anglade conducted the officers himself into all the places occupied by him and his family. They opened the closets, the coffers, the drawers; they searched in the beds, in the mattresses—but they found nothing. They next entered the garret; but Madame d'Anglade excused herself from accompanying them thither on the pretence of being suddenly seized with a sort of vertigo and faintness. In the garret they found an old chest, and in this chest, which was full of clothes and linen, they discovered a rouleau of 70 louis, *au cordon*, wrapped up in a printed paper, containing the remains of a genealogical table, which the count declared to be his own. He added, that these louis must be part of those which had been stolen from him; because his and these were coined in the same year—a circumstance which he had forgotten to mention in his complaint. D'Anglade was therefore asked where those louis d'ors came from; and he could only answer that he could not tell, but that he could give a good account of them.

The Lieutenant of police seized these louis, in order that they might be carefully put in deposit, as proofs leading to conviction of the real culprit; and d'Anglade counted them himself before the judge took possession of them. As he counted them, he felt his hand shake, and he exclaimed, "I tremble." Some of the domestics who were present, declared then, and repeated afterwards in the information, that d'Anglade had appeared surprised at the arrival of the count, and that his wife seemed confounded when she was first informed of it.

When the whole party had left the garret, Madame d'Anglade desired the lieutenant of police to observe that the door of the apartment in which the chaplain, the page, and the valet de chambre slept, had been only pulled to, and not shut, for which odd circumstance there were doubtless sufficient reasons to be given; and she added, that the valet de chambre ought to be examined, as that might lead to a discovery, and he very possibly might have been guilty of the robbery. The precipitation with which Madame d'Anglade thus endeavored to fix the

crime on one particular individual, when the count himself had not yet dared to suspect any one, caused not only surprise but suspicion in the mind of the judge ; and with a sort of retributive justice, this eagerness to accuse, fatally recoiled on the accuser. But this surprise and these suspicions increased, and spread from one person to the other ; when the count declared solemnly, that his valet had followed him into the country, and did not arrive in Paris again till after him. Madame d'Anglade, however, still persisted in suspecting this servant, and replied, that he had, in all probability, concealed some one in his chamber, in order that the robbery might be committed. But how could this robber, if so concealed, have been able to carry away the stolen goods, when the key of the street door was actually all the time in the possession of Monsieur and Madame d'Anglade ? The same observation served to justify Formenie, the waiting maid of the countess ; who, as was before observed, remained in the house during the absence of her master, and had been entrusted with the key of the apartment.

After this conversation, they searched the room which Madame d'Anglade was so eager to have examined ; and they actually found in a corner of it, five bags, containing a thousand livres each, and a sixth bag, containing a thousand livres, excepting the sum of two hundred and nineteen livres and nineteen sols.

This discovery, instead of averting suspicion from the d'Anglades, fixed it on them still more strongly ; for, as they had once been the principal occupiers of the house, it was very possible that they had master keys to all the apartments ; and it was immediately recollected, that when the Marquis d'Anglade had lived in the apartments then occupied by the count, and a Monsieur Grimaudet had lived in the apartment immediately above him, Grimaudet had been robbed of a considerable quantity of plate ; nor was it doubted but that more would have been stolen, had it not been perceived that the key of the first chamber had been taken away.

The criminal had never been discovered, but it was very

evident that the robbery had been committed by means of the stolen key. By means of a false or master key, the robbery on the count also must have been committed; and while these recollections and these ideas occurred to the lieutenant of police, and to the other persons present, they could not help remembering that the d'Anglades were occupants of the house during both the robberies.

The only lock which had been forced was that of the strong box, and it was undoubtedly impossible that the thief should have procured himself the key of a coffer which had never been at his disposal. It was a fact too, that the d'Anglades knew that the count had by him a considerable sum of money; and they also knew the exact amount of it, as they had offered to procure him the means of employing it to advantage; besides, though they had accepted the invitation to Ville-boisin, they excused themselves from going thither, on a frivolous pretext, and by not going, they remained sole masters of the house; they had likewise required to have the key of the street door in their custody, though it was usually left in the care of the count's servants.

Amongst the louis d'ors too, were several of a rare and high prized quality. Such louis d'ors had been stolen from the count, and d'Anglade could not say where he obtained his! And where are they hidden? In a garret, and in a chest designed to contain old clothes and old linen; in short, in a place where no one would think of looking for a valuable deposit. This consideration, joined to the excuse of indisposition made by Madame d'Anglade, in order to avoid being present while her garret was searched, seemed to prove that she feared the discovery of the stolen goods.

At least thus reasoned, and thus felt, thus suspected the lieutenant of police; and this mass of presumptive evidence was increased by the appearance of uneasiness and terror which was *said* to be exhibited by the husband and wife, on learning the unexpected return of the count and countess; for as yet, they had not had time to remove all the stolen effects! However, Madame

d'Anglade sought to avert all suspicion of her own guilt, by endeavoring to fix it on another. But she did so in vain; for the three servants whom she wished to criminate, had been under their master's eye during the whole term of his absence. It was, therefore, impossible that they should have opened the door of their chamber; and yet, though one of them had double-locked it, and carried the key away with him, the door was found open when they returned! Consequently, it must have been opened by a false key; and who but the d'Anglades could possibly be in possession of one? Therefore, the money found there, instead of being evidence against the persons who lodged in that apartment, appeared evidence against the d'Anglades; and the earnestness with which Madame d'Anglade urged them to search that room, seemed only to prove that, as it was an apartment not belonging to her, the stolen effects being found there, would prevent, she thought, suspicion from lighting on her and her husband, and fix it entirely on the innocent servants.

All these ideas combined, formed in the opinion of the lieutenant of police a body of evidence so strong, that he could not help saying to d'Anglade, "Either you or I committed this robbery." Let me observe here, with the honest pride of an Englishwoman, that no judge in my country could have uttered so wicked a prejudgment without being infamous for life, and that no one could have listened to it without immediately reproving him in the language of virtuous indignation and of outraged humanity.

But this judge of the unhappy d'Anglades, mistaking the agitation of anguish for that of conscious guilt, and being more eager to draw conclusions from slight premises than to wait for the exhibition of strong ones, allowed his suspicions to be so riveted on d'Anglade and his wife, that he thought it superfluous to search the other apartments, especially when the count proudly assured him that he would answer for the honesty of his domestics.

Immediately then the lieutenant of police, on the requisition of the count, ordered the commitment of the d'Anglades. But before they were conducted to prison they were searched, and in d'Anglade's purse were found seventeen louis d'ors, and a double Spanish pistole; a circumstance which added to the suspicious circumstances preceding this; for a considerable portion of the effects stolen from the count consisted of pistoles. The husband was then conducted to the Chatélet, and the wife to the fort L'Evêque, where they were immediately confined in separate dungeons, and the jailors forbidden, under a severe penalty to let them speak to any human being.

The prosecution now commenced; and the lieutenant of police, that man whose mind was crowded with prejudices against the unfortunate d'Anglades, that very man was to preside at the tribunal as their judge. D'Anglade indeed appealed against his jurisdiction, as persons about to be tried in our courts sometimes challenge such jurymen as are likely, they know, to be adverse to them; but he appealed in vain, and his appeal only served to add personal animosity to the prejudice which Deffeta had already conceived against him. Witnesses were examined indeed with seeming impartiality, but their evidence was in reality twisted to the purpose of those who desired to prove guilty the man whom they were determined to believe so.

Another circumstance which operated powerfully against the accused, and which holds out a warning example of the danger as well as folly and wickedness of any species of duplicity, was, the mystery in which d'Anglade, whose false pride was not yet sufficiently subdued, still continued to envelope his real birth and fortune. For, as if he foolishly thought, that in the moral, as in the physical world, what is only dimly seen, and partially revealed, borrows thence the appearance of grandeur, and that a man's origin, like a mountain whose top is hidden by clouds, and seen in the dim shade of twilight, acquires dignity and greatness from being involved in mystery;

certain it is, that it was with the greatest difficulty the judge could follow him through all the evasions by which he replied to the simplest questions relative to his family and means of living ; and as wherever there is concealment and evasion one is justified in believing that there is also guilt, it was not in the power of any judge, any witness, or any enemy, to injure d'Anglade in the minds of those present in as great a degree as he injured himself by this paltry and culpable conduct.

His family was, it was easily ascertained, by no means noble, though he really had the title of marquis ; but it was not so easy to decide with certainty on the manner in which he was enabled to support a style of living so superior to his apparent revenue ; and on this subject, as well as on the other, he refused to be explicit. There is, however, reason to suppose, that so far from d'Anglade's having increased his income by the unworthy means imputed to him—such as play, usury, swindling, and robbery—he employed certain hours of the morning in virtuous industry, and in employments which, however derogatory they might be deemed to the rank of gentlemen, by the noble, the idle, and the empty minded, would have raised him high in the opinion of all those whose judgment on human conduct is enlightened, and whose approbation it is an honor to possess.

To be brief ; on no stronger grounds than that seventy louis d'ors similar to those lost by the Count de Montgommery were found hidden on the premises ; that d'Anglade while he counted them showed strong emotion, and exclaimed, "I tremble ;" that Madame d'Anglade excused herself from accompanying them in the search in the garret, and with great eagerness endeavored to fix suspicion on the valet de chambre, d'Anglade and his unhappy wife had been committed to prison ; and on the same weak evidence, d'Anglade was judged deserving to be put to the rack, in order that a confession of his guilt might be wrung from him ; and he actually underwent the *question ordinaire et extraordinaire*.

But when there, he confessed nothing ; for indeed he

had nothing to confess. Immediately afterward, by a definitive judgment he was condemned to the galleys for nine years, and his wife was banished from the jurisdiction of Paris for the same space of time, besides being condemned to such restitutions and reparations to the Count de Montgomery as completely swallowed up their already slender property.

Indeed the judges were so convinced of d'Anglade's guilt, that as the nature of the proceedings against him did not allow them to inflict the punishment of death, which they thought due to his crime, they resolved to put in force every torture which the law did not forbid them to use.

It is the usual custom to give some refreshment to the unfortunate wretches to whom torture has been applied. But d'Anglade, instead of receiving this cheering attention, was conducted from the place of torture into the darkest dungeon of the tower of Montgomery. But in his miserable dungeon, and while his body, lacerated by the rack, was bent to the earth with every possible physical pain and weakness, his mind happily shook off the trammels of false pride and wordly vanity; and as a man and as a christian he rose superior to his trials, and became a striking example of piety and patience. But at first, his mind, as well as his frame, sunk beneath the suddenness as well as cruelty of the blow. The same hour saw him affluent and respected, and an accused robber and a prisoner! The same hour saw him happy in the society of a fond wife and affectionate child, and torn from their embraces, perhaps for ever, while they were dragged to the unwholesome walls of one dungeon, and he to another.

Besides, the man who thus suffered, was one even weakly tenacious on the score of honor, one who loved reputation and respect more than life itself; and now, though innocent of even an intentional crime, this slave of pride and reputation saw himself for ever banished from society, by being accused and convicted of atrocious guilt, while those that he most tenderly loved were

the sharers in his ignominy, and in his unmerited sufferings.

Nor was the fate of Madame d'Anglade much less severe. Timid and retiring in her nature, she had always avoided notice, and thought "a woman's loveliest station was retreat." But now she was made an object of public observation and notoriety, and not by a display of heroic virtue, such as has sometimes distinguished women in all countries and in all times; not by a splendid exertion of talents, capable by the fame which waits upon it to recompense the woman who has performed it for the pain and injury which she often experiences from the envy of her own sex and the severe tenaciousness of the other; but she was called forth from her virtuous and respectable obscurity in order to be arraigned as a thief, and imprisoned as a convicted felon; and she, whose modest eye had always shrunk from the gaze even of respectful admiration, was now exposed to the agonizing stare of unfeeling curiosity and public contempt.

Poor, injured innocents! In England, where the nature and the laws of evidence have been deeply studied and are thoroughly understood, ye would not have pleaded for justice in vain, but acquittal would have instantly followed accusation.

But, as I before observed, the mind of d'Anglade, aided by religion, conquered at length the dreadful feelings of anguish, which at first were the necessary consequences of his sudden and most unmerited misfortunes. Yet, as a husband and a father, he suffered still; and at the thought of his wife and child, even the fortitude of his piety forsook him; and when he learnt from the jailor that he was forbidden all communication with them, or with any one, his agony baffled description, and what he had before suffered seemed trifling in comparison.

"But surely, surely I shall be allowed to see my child!" cried he in a transport of grief.

"Yes; in nine years' time, when you return from the galleys," replied the jailor.

"I shall never return," said d'Anglade, with the look

and tone of desperation, "I shall die there;" when suddenly he reflected that there was consolation in that thought; and as he was soon to pass from time to eternity, he felt how insignificant were all the ties and trials of this world; and lifting up his soul to his Creator, the murmurs of regret were lost in the consoling aspirations of pious patience and religious hope.

A few days after, he was taken from the tower of Montgomery, and led, bruised and lacerated as he was, to the castle of La Tournelle.

At length, overpowered by so many evils, he fell dangerously ill, and it was judged necessary to administer the sacrament to him. While receiving it, he declared by words, and subsequently in writing, that he was entirely innocent of the crime imputed to him; but that he pardoned his enemies and persecutors; and that all the regret which he now felt was, that he was only sentenced to be tied to a chain, whereas his blessed Saviour was nailed to a cross. Unhappily, however, he got the better of his illness, and remained in this horrible abode, supported by charitable contributions, till the departure of the chain of galley slaves to which he belonged.

It is said that the count de Montgomery solicited to have the departure of d'Anglade take place even before he was restored to health; and he waited on the road to see him pass, in order to enjoy the horrible spectacle of his sufferings and humiliation. Such was the man whose notice was once supposed by the deceived d'Anglade to confer honor upon him! But when the innocent victim beheld his persecutor, and understood the dreadful motives which led him to witness his distress, he feebly exclaimed—having first raised his eyes to heaven with an expression of meek resignation—"I would rather at this moment be the poor, suffering d'Anglade, than the Count de Montgomery; for is it not nobler to suffer than to do evil?"

The rack had so much injured the limbs of d'Anglade that it was impossible for him to use them, and if he moved in the slightest degree, he experienced the most

insupportable agonies. He was therefore laid upon the cart by two men; and at night when they slept on the road, he was taken out and laid on a little straw, in a barn or under a hedge. When he arrived at Marseilles, he was conducted to the hospital for convicts there, where he had soon the happiness of learning from the medical attendant that his life was drawing to a close. At this moment the dear images of his wife and child recurred to him in all their power. "And I must never see them more! and I must die without embracing them!" he cried, "nay, without sending them my parting blessing!"

Fortunately, however, the surgeon who attended him was himself a husband and a father, and could therefore feel for d'Anglade.

"Dictate to me," said he to him, "whatever you wish to say to your wife and child, and I pledge my honor that it shall be delivered to them."

D'Anglade thanked him with his tears. It was the first time, for months, that he had heard the voice of kindness, and it was welcome indeed. But there was no time to be lost; and the surgeon, having procured the necessary materials, d'Anglade, with a considerable effort, dictated as follows;

"I am dying, best beloved of my heart, the victim of my sufferings; but I conjure you, my Sophia, to rise superior to this new trial. Live, I charge you, to see my character and your own cleared from every stain! and something whispers me, that, sooner or later, our innocence shall be made manifest. Live therefore—I repeat it—to hasten that moment, if it be possible, and to enjoy it for the sake of our innocent girl, now, alas! enveloped in her parents' shame. O that I could once more behold you both! But God's will be done! I trust that we shall meet in heaven. My Constantia! my child! accept my parting blessing, and listen to my last advice. Think nothing dishonorable but vice—nothing valuable but virtue. Conquer poverty by industry; and blush not for the labor that confers on you honorable

independence ! May you, too, live to aid the re-establishment of my fame and honor, and to enjoy the accomplishment of it ! O my child ! let your filial piety comfort and console your poor mother ! And is it thus we part ? But it is the will of my Creator, and I will murmur no more.

“ Farewell ! farewell for ever !

“ L. G. D’ANGLADE.”

As soon as d’Anglade was no more, the surgeon enclosed this letter in an envelope, which contained a few lines from himself, to Madame d’Anglade, announcing to her the death of her husband, after such weakness and such suffering as made him incapable of writing himself ; and assuring her, at the same time, that in his death he was happy—for that he died the death of the righteous ; and that he earnestly wished that his own latter end might be like his.

Let us now return to Madame d’Anglade, and her only child, whose fate had been little less unfortunate than that of the marquis. When dragged to prison, she was on the point of becoming a mother a second time ; and terror and anxiety soon had a sensible effect on her health, and a fatal one on the yet unborn infant, which lived not to see the light of day. In this terrible situation, and while liable to long and successive fainting fits, she had no assistance but from Constantia, whose own health was considerably injured by the hardships which surrounded them.

In the middle of a rigorous winter they were in a cavern where no air could enter, and where chill damps stood upon the wall ; a little charcoal in an earthen pot was all the fire which was allowed them, and the smoke was so offensive and dangerous that it increased rather than diminished their sufferings ; their food depended on charity, and they had no relief but what their priest from time to time procured them.

At length, as a great favor, they were removed to a place less damp, to which there was a little window ; but the window was closed up, and the fumes of the charcoal

were as noxious here as in the cavern which they had left. Here, however, they remained four or five months ; and Madame d'Anglade, supported by the hope of happier days, and by the ever dear expectation of being at last restored to liberty and her husband, if not to reputation and society, still clung to existence, though held on terms, wretched as these were.

But at length the surgeon's and her husband's letters reached her ; and the hope which had supported her was destroyed for ever.

"Mother, dear mother !" cried Constantia, a few days after they had heard the mournful tidings, "do not give way to this excessive sorrow ; remember, my father bids you live ! live to see his memory justified ! and I, think how earnestly I desire you to live for my sake !"

Madame d'Anglade tried to live, and tried to console herself with the idea that her beloved husband was not only removed from his sufferings, but was in a state of happiness. But the mortal blow was sped ! the hope for which she supported life was no more ! Disgrace and imprisonment, sickness, poverty, and dependence she had endured with fortitude ; for the husband of her heart yet lived, and she knew that his fortitude equalled hers. Their punishment was, she knew, but for a time ; and at the end of that time they should meet, rehearse their past sufferings together, and perhaps forget them ; nay, be repaid for them by their happy re-union ! But d'Anglade was dead ; and all her flattering dreams were vanished for ever.

"It is past, my child !" cried she in a faint voice, in less than a fortnight after she received the melancholy tidings ; "the struggle is at length over, and, purified by suffering, I am about, I trust, to be re-united to your blessed father ; but oh ! when I think of you, and your unprotected state, the thought of death distracts me, and nothing but horrors surround me !"

I will not dwell on a scene so painful to the feelings as that exhibited by an affectionate mother leaving an only daughter in so forlorn and so cruel a situation, and

under such deplorable circumstances. Suffice it, that Madame d'Anglade breathed her last in a few hours after the conversation related above, leaving Constantia no resources but in her own energies ; and when d'Anglade's crime, according to the many—his unjust condemnation, according to the few—was forgotten, and talked of no more, the fatal consequences of it continued to be felt by his unhappy orphan, who had ever present to her thoughts the consciousness of her parents' disgrace, and the misery which her poor mother experienced on her account, even in the last pangs of dissolution.

But to some it is given to know only the pleasures of paternity ; and while the dying Madame d'Anglade was agonized by the consciousness that she left the exemplary child, whose filial piety had soothed her sorrows and alleviated her sufferings by the most unwearied attention, no inheritance but disgrace, no dower but unmerited misfortune, the President Des Essars was as happy in the hopes, as the mother of Constantia was wretched in the fears, of a parent.

He too had an only child ; a youth who was accomplished, dutiful, moral, and pious, and who was at once the pride and happiness of his life.

When the unfortunate d'Anglades had been dead rather more than three years, Eugene des Essars had reached the age of one and twenty ; and his father was desirous of marrying him to a young and rich heiress, who had been the companion and playfellow of his childhood.

But Eugene's affections did not follow the direction of his father's wishes, and his heart was as yet untouched by any one ; therefore, though he had hitherto been eager to obey the President's slightest desires, he earnestly entreated, on this occasion, that he might be allowed to please himself, as he felt an irresistible repugnance to become a husband, unless he entertained for his intended wife a decided preference and devoted attachment. The President, reluctantly, but wisely, granted his son the freedom which he asked ; and the young

heiress, piqued at Eugene's indifference, immediately married another man; while his father, having not yet fixed on another heiress to supply her place, as candidate for Eugene's affections, listened with complacency to his objections against marrying at all; and declared, that he should always feel it his duty to consult Eugene's feelings on a subject of more importance to him than to any one else.

Still, in spite of this obliging declaration, Eugene felt his serenity and his peace completely interrupted, by the consciousness that the President had once proposed marriage to him, and therefore might do so again—as the inhabitant of a room which has once been reported to have been visited by a ghost, never feels completely safe in it from a second visit, although the perturbed spirit is supposed to have been laid.

Eugene was completely happy in his single state, as he was uninterrupted in his studies, independent in his will; and in spite of himself he became thoughtful and disturbed from the mere apprehension of a distant evil; for an evil to him any change would have appeared. But his feelings and his pensiveness remained unquestioned and unobserved. He was so much more devoted to study than to society; so honorably ambitious to qualify himself to shine in the profession of the law, for which he was designed; so much fonder of books than of men; that no one observed his increased gravity and thoughtfulness; and his father was more willing to attribute it to abstraction and learned reveries, than to a sense of present, or the apprehension of future uneasiness. But though the eyes even of an affectionate parent may be blinded by some particular and powerful circumstances; though the friend of the day, and the companion in crowds and in dissipation may not observe the casual variations of our looks and our countenances; the domestic who has been accustomed to look up in our face for the usual smile of goodwill, tempering the command of authority; the dependent, who owes to our attention not only daily bread, but that degree of confi-

dence which such attention can alone impart—to these, the slightest cloud athwart one's brow is discernible ; and in their faces, better than in the countenances of our equals or superiors, can we read what our own countenance expresses, and our real value as members of society.

This truth was experienced by Eugene des Essars. At home, no one but his own valet remarked that he did not look well, and that he ate nothing at the crowded and well covered table of his father ; and the only person who gazed on his pale cheek with solicitude, and marked, with anxious kindness, his absence, his taciturnity, and the uneasiness painted in his countenance, was Madeleine Tournon, a bed-ridden elderly woman, who had nursed his mother when she died in bringing him into the world, and had been his nurse from the day of his birth, till he no longer required her attendance. But with her services did not finish his respect and affection for her, nor hers for him. Madeleine had been well educated, and was respectably born ; but a thoughtless father and a bad husband had reduced her to a level with the lowest ; and it was only in the service of the President des Essars that she had met with kindness mingled with respect, and had found her claims to compassion and attention fully owned and gratified. Consequently, she esteemed the baron ; and she loved, nay, even adored his son ; and when, in consequence of a severe complaint, Madeleine was confined to her bed, and pronounced incapable of ever rising from it again, she declared that she felt her calamity a blessing rather than a misfortune, because it insured to her the pleasure of seeing her dear child Eugene des Essars every day, as he made it a point of conscience to visit her daily, in order to repay to her, in some measure, her active services to his father, and her tender, incessant care of his own childhood.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Madeleine should immediately perceive on the expressive countenance of Eugene, some signs of the uneasiness which

tormented him ; and having expressed her anxiety in terms congenial to her warm and affectionate feelings, it is also not to be wondered at that Eugene should feel more at ease and more happy in her company, when he had once opened his heart to her and had listened to her soothing, than he did in the gay circles of Paris. Consequently, her humble roof and solitary bedside, had for him more attraction than gayer, richer scenes ; and while many a lovely heiress, many a blooming maid, sighed in secret for his absence, he was sitting by the couch of Madeleine, listening to her tales of other times, shifting her pillow for her, administering to her her accustomed dose of *tisane*, or unfolding to her the most secret wishes of his heart, and describing the necessary qualifications in a woman, without which he could never be happy in the married state.

Madeleine listened, approved, wondered, feared, and hoped with him ; but she always ended with cautioning him against allowing himself to form an attachment to any woman who would, in all probability, be absolutely disapproved of by the president.

"I hope," said Eugene, one day, in answer to these cautions, "I hope that I am incapable of allowing myself to feel a passion which must be disapproved by my father. Believe me, dear Madeleine, I should firmly set about nipping such a passion in the bud."

"But suppose the passion should already be full blown before you were conscious that it had even burst its green pod?"

"Impossible ! I am as much aware as you are of my own liability to fall violently in love some time or other, and I should be on my guard against the approaching danger."

"Still, it is very fortunate for you, my dear child, that I have no daughter or female friend living with me, or visiting me when you do ; for, if I had, you would be in great danger of liking her too well, even if she had no great attractions."

"Why so, Madeleine?"

"Because love, like some fine plants of rare quality, flourishes most in retired places. It flies the too glaring sunshine of crowded scenes, or puts forth a few gaudy, feeble flowers there, which live their little hour, and then droop and die. But in retirement, and in the still shade of solitude, it strikes a deep, lasting root; it requires no hand to plant it, no care to nourish it, no rich soil to manure it. It is the place, the situation which it delights in; and when once it has established itself there, it shoots forth into luxuriant branches, and, according to the circumstances which surround it, its flowers yield healthy fragrance or deadly poison; and they will either form the nuptial garland of the happy lover, or strew the hopeless lover's grave."

"Madeleine, how metaphorical you are!" replied Eugene, smiling; "but I believe your metaphor is just; and I also believe that love is like some weeds, which, when we imagine we have rooted them out, spring up again when we least expect them. But, had you a niece, a daughter, or a friend, with your mind, dear Madeleine!"

"Well; and what then?"

"Why, then—why, then we should make a most happy trio—that's all," added Eugene, sighing; and he and Madeleine both fell into a deep reverie.

At length Madeleine said, "My dear child, I wish you, if you please, not to visit me so soon in the evening, in future. If you could come an hour later, it would be more to my convenience. Could you oblige me so far?"

"I will make a point of it," replied Eugene; and they separated soon after for the evening.

But the next day Eugene forgot his promise; and having something particular to say to Madeleine, he hurried to her house, even sooner than usual.

She lived in a small cottage in the Champs Elisées; and as Eugene drew near it, he saw a tall, slender woman, plainly but neatly clad, her arms gracefully folded in a long black veil, which seemed put on to screen her from observation, but which, from its peculiarity, exposed her to it the more. But proceeding onward with a slow, dig-

nified, and graceful motion, she seemed wholly unconscious of the attention which she excited. "If her face equal her form, and if she be young," thought Eugene, "she is a beautiful creature indeed ! I wonder who she is !" and he proceeded slowly to Madeleine's cottage. Madeleine started, and blushed on seeing him, and reminded him rather angrily, that he had broken his promise.

"It is very true," replied Eugene, "but I beg your pardon, and will be more obedient tomorrow." However, she was evidently disconcerted, evidently chagrined ; and when he rose to depart, though earlier than he usually did, she did not offer to detain him. The next day he meant to keep his promise exactly ; but his father had formed an engagement for him which rendered it impossible ; and he found he must either give up seeing Madeleine entirely, or go as early to her as he had done the preceding evening ; he therefore resolved to risk her displeasure, rather than hurt her feelings by not seeing her at all in the day ; and accordingly, he set off on his visit, full an hour before the accustomed time. He had nearly reached the gate, when he saw it open, and the lady whom he had seen the day before, came out of it. Eugene immediately quickened his pace, in order to come up to her before her veil which was, he saw, thrown back, should be pulled down again. He did so ; and found that her beauty fully equalled that of her form. She appeared more than twenty, yet she was not eighteen ; but early sorrow, and circumstances painfully stimulating, had given an early maturity to her mind, and to her young features the deeply marked expression and character of riper years. Her cheek was pale as death, her features regular and commanding, and her large dark eyes seemed dimmed by incessant grief.

Eugene's earnest scrutinizing gaze confused the incognita, and she sought to draw down her veil, in order to conceal her face from his view ; but in her confusion, instead of fulfilling her intention, she did the exact contrary, and her veil fell to the ground, leaving her whole person, modestly clothed in a coarse but white garment,

exposed to his eager admiration ; nor could she help allowing him to stoop for her veil, and assist her in throwing it over her shoulders ; while a deep blush overspread her fine features, and a sort of pensive smile stole over them, as she curtsied her thanks and withdrew, which made her even more lovely in his eyes than she had appeared before ; and he stood gazing at her till she was out of sight, with his hand on Madeleine's door, unconscious of every thing but the lovely vision before him. But when it was vanished, he recollected with *rapture*, not unmixed with surprise, that she had been visiting Madeleine, and he rushed into her apartment with a flushed cheek and a beating heart.

"Oh, Madeleine !" cried he, "do tell me who—"

"So !" exclaimed she, sinking back on her pillow ; "you need not go on ; I know what you would say—you have seen her, and all my precautions have been vain !"

"And why should I *not* see her ?" cried Eugene, seizing her hand ; "why did you wish to prevent me from seeing her ? why wish to deprive me of so much happiness ?"

"Happiness ! did you say ?" cried Madeleine. "There, go—leave me—and come hither no more !"

"Madeleine, you shock and terrify me !—what do you mean ? Forbid me your house !—forbid it me, too, when—"

"Yes—when you have found out what a treasure it occasionally contains."

"Then she does visit here often, does she ?"

"Often ! She and you are the comfort of my life !"

"Heaven bless her !" exclaimed Eugene, traversing the room hastily ; "but she looks good !—she looks like an angel !"

Madeline looked at him, and sighed deeply.

"But how has it been possible, Madeleine, that you should not have mentioned her to me ?—What prevented you ?"

"Honor—principle ; was I, the dependent on your

father's bounty, to expose his only child to the danger of forming an improper attachment ? ”

“ Improper attachment ? ”

“ Yes ; had my young friend rank and fortune equal to her virtues, I should have gloried in seeing you united to her ; but, as it is, her very name is an eternal bar to your union ; and—”

Her *name* a bar ! Why, who is she ? For pity's sake, trifle with my impatience no longer ! What is her name ? ”

“ Constantia d'Anglade ! ”

“ Constantia d'Anglade ! What, that poor unfortunate orphan, over whose fate I have so often wept ?—the daughter of that unhappy husband and that unhappy wife, so cruelly, in my opinion, and so unjustly condemned ? ”

“ Unjustly condemned ! ” cried Madeleine with a scream of joy ; “ and do you, then, believe them innocent ? ”

“ I do ; nay, I always did ; though my father was ever violently against them.”

“ Oh, my dear Constantia ! ” said Madeleine, shedding tears as she spoke, “ how happy would you be to know that there is one human being in the world, besides the poor Madeleine, who thinks your revered parents injured and innocent ! ”

“ Then tell her directly ; pray do, Madeleine ; and you may also tell her, that I am convinced, one day or other, the innocence of her parents will be made manifest to the world.”

“ My dear good child, it is the hope of that alone that has supported her under her trials.”

“ But tell me all you know of her ; pray do.”

Madeleine, in her delight at finding Eugene a friend to the injured d'Anglades, forgot all her caution, and related to him the misery of Constantia ; when, at the age of fifteen, she found herself an indigent orphan, with a name publicly disgraced, with scarcely any friend in the world, and with no resources but her own industry.

“ But she had energy, she had virtue, she had piety,” cried Madeleine ; “ and remembering that I had been

the friend of her mother, in the days of our joy and prosperity, and had written kindly to her in her adversity, and had come to my house, and conjured me to take her under my protection, and let her board with me, and I maintained herself by embroidery, and other sorts of needlework, assisted by the niggard bounty of a distant relative. I folded her fondly to my bosom, and I told her to be my friend; but I also told her, that I could not allow her to live under the same roof with me, for I knew that my protector, the President des Esclaves, had been so convinced of her parents' guilt that he would be angry if I received their daughter as my guest. Besides, I had another objection to this arrangement. I looked at her, young, beautiful, innocent, and untried; and I thought of *you, Eugene.*"

"Well, well; go on—you were only too polite," exclaimed. And Madeleine continued:—

"Constantia was disappointed; but she felt the force of my objection, and it was at length decided that she should have a small lodging, which I recommended her to take, and only visit me every evening."

"And does she visit you only in an evening?"

"No; she hates to be seen; she dreads observation; she sinks under the consciousness of being looked at as the child of a condemned criminal; and with no other man being but myself will she ever now hold out her hand."

"Poor Constantia!" said Eugene, with a deep sigh. "and can she maintain herself?"

"Yes—her wants are few; the necessities of life are all that she requires; and even out of her pocket she finds means to bring me, every now and then, a little present, to show her good will; for she loves me tenderly, because I think her dear parents sufficiently justly."

"Then," exclaimed Eugene, pressing Madeleine with even convulsive earnestness, "for the same reason she would love me too! Well—but, Madeleine, what can we do for her? what can I do for her?"

“Do? you do for her?”

“Yes; who should, if I do not! I, the heir of thousands—I, rioting in luxuries, while she is forced to earn her daily bread—I, courted, honored, and flattered, from the mere empty pretensions and accident of birth and fortune; while she, rich in beauty and virtues, is forced to hide herself from the obloquy which no crime of hers, real or supposed, can have deserved, and to hold converse with only one human being, because that one has candor, justice, and sensibility! I can’t bear it, Madeleine, I can’t bear it! Nay, don’t shake your head; I am not in love with Mademoiselle d’Anglade; I never shall be in love with her; she is to me an object too sacred for aught but distant, respectful admiration; her wrongs and her sorrows inspire me with a sort of—of—of awe and veneration for her, wholly incompatible with a softer passion. I feel that I could almost move mountains to do her service; but, believe me, dear Madeleine, my feelings have nothing of love in them!”

And strange to say, Madeleine believed him; but he could not prevail on her to believe that it would become Constantia d’Anglade to receive pecuniary favors from a young man.

“But remember,” said Eugene, “I have a claim on her—I believe her father and mother innocent!”

“And as that is the greatest favor you can bestow on her, so it is the *only* one which she without a blush can receive.”

“Well, but you will let me see her and know her?”

“If she has no objection.”

“But I am her *father’s friend*!” cried Eugene; and having repeated his claims to Constantia’s favor on that account a hundred times, he took his leave, resolved to watch his opportunity, and introduce himself.

The succeeding evening, when he went to Madeleine’s house, he thought he should arrive there just before Constantia left her; but as he opened the street door, he found her on the other side of it preparing to depart. Eugene had now the long wished for opportunity to intro-

duce himself ; but, alas ! where was his courage ! He was unable either to speak or to detain Constantia ; and while, with rather a cold and forbidding stateliness, she made him a slight bow, and left the house—

“ This is very strange,” thought he ; “ to be sure Madeleine has not told her what I think of her father.”

“ You came rather *mal-apropos*,” said Madeleine, as spiritless and disappointed he entered, and threw himself on a seat beside her.

“ Just as you attempted to open the door, which made, you know, some resistance, and consequently some noise, I was telling Mademoiselle d’Anglade that I was expecting the son of the President des Essars ; and I was going to inform her of your sentiments relative to her parents, when I heard you coming, and told her I believed you were then at the door ; on which she started up in great disorder, exclaiming that she hated to see or be seen by any one ; but more especially she wished to avoid the son of a man who had done all he could, she knew, to procure the condemnation of her injured parents. Nor could I,” added Madeleine, “ detain her an instant.”

This information removed Eugene’s depression of spirits immediately ; for he felt that, grateful as it would be to the feelings of Constantia to know that any one believed her parents innocent, it would be doubly so to find their warm defender and friend in the son of the President des Essars.

“ Well—but, dear Madeleine,” cried Eugene, “ she will come again tomorrow, and then you will tell her every thing.”

Madeleine promised compliance ; and Eugene, animated with the certainty that he should be the means of procuring a feeling of extreme satisfaction to the unfortunate Constantia, returned home in a very enviable frame of mind.

The following evening he did not set out for his accustomed visit till he thought Constantia must have been some time with Madeleine ; and then he repaired to her house, with a beating heart, and full of an emo-

tion so violent as to be almost painful. When he entered the room, he saw Constantia, with her veil thrown back on her shoulders, sitting by Madeleine, and a glow of satisfaction overspreading her fine countenance, which his conscious heart told him was probably owing to him ; and he was confirmed in this pleasurable idea, when Constantia arose as he approached her, bowing in respectful silence, (for not a word could he utter,) and smiling on him, while her eyes glistened with tears, pressed her hands gracefully on her heart, as if to express her gratitude, and curtsied to him with respect nearly equal to that with which he saluted her.

"I need not introduce you to each other, my dear children," cried Madeleine, while Eugene pressed her hand even with more than his usual cordiality ; for you know, Eugene, that is Mademoiselle d'Anglade, and—"

"And I know," interrupted Constantia with a faltering voice, "that in this gentleman I see a man who dares to think for himself, and who adds to the penetration necessary to discover innocence, though involved in a cloud of suspicion and prejudice, the courage and the kindness to make that opinion known."

Still Eugene only bowed, and stammered out—"Madam, you do me honor ; I only did justice—I—"

But Constantia did not observe his emotion ; she was only pleausurably alive to her own.

"Sir," she continued, her full heart overflowing at her eyes, which she raised to Eugene's with an expression which penetrated to his soul, "this dear friend has been for years the only person whom I have dared to look in the face ; because she, and she only, believed my revered parents innocent, and beheld me not as the child of persons infamous as well as disgraced, and as the probable sharer of their iniquity, but as the unfortunate offspring of two of the best and most injured of human beings. But, sir, there is now another of my fellow creatures whose eyes I can presume to meet ; and proud am I to say that you are that person ; you have bestowed an additional value on my almost joyless existence ; and God reward

you, sir, for the satisfaction which you have given to a poor, forlorn, and miserable orphan !”

“ Mademoiselle,” at length articulated Eugene, taking her hand and respectfully bowing on it as he spoke, “ this is the happiest moment of my life !”

He said no more ; but he had been sufficiently eloquent.

From this day forward Eugene and Constantia met frequently by the sick couch of Madeleine. Constantia, attributing to filial piety and gratitude alone the pleasure which she took in the society of one of the finest and most amiable youths in the world, thought it was virtue to indulge her partiality, and to seek his conversation ; while Eugene, deceiving himself into a firm belief that his attention to Constantia, and the avowed pleasure which he derived from associating with her, were the results only of admiration, pity, and the justice due to oppressed innocence, contented with the present, looked not forward to the future, but divided his time and his thoughts between the studies of his profession and the humble apartment of Madeleine. And never was there a happier trio than Madeleine’s lowly room exhibited ; Constantia had obtained a new auditor to hear the tale of her father’s wrongs, her mother’s sufferings, and to sympathize with all the sorrows of the fair relater. She had also another sharer in her hopes of obtaining, one day, retributive justice, and of clearing from every cloud the reputation of her parents. At these moments Eugene used to seize her hand, and swear on it, that if he should be engaged in his professional career when the real culprits, for whose guilt d’Anglade had suffered, should be brought to public justice, she should have no pleader on her side more ardent than himself, or more wholly devoted to her service.

“ O Madeleine !” he used to say, “ what a triumph it would be to me to gain my first renown by proving the innocence of the parents of Constantia d’Anglade !”

“ And to have their innocence proved by *you* would add to my satisfaction,” cried Constantia.

"And to know that their innocence was proved, and that *you* proved it, my dear child, would almost restore me to the use of my limbs again. Yes—I declare I think that I could rise and walk into the hall of justice."

"When I try this cause," exclaimed Eugene, "and when I have gained a decree in my favor—"

"I declare I believe the joy will kill me," said Madeleine.

"And me too," cried Constantia, bursting into tears; "but when—(recollection restoring her to the sad reality of the present moment,) when will this happy time come?"

"It must come, and it shall come!" exclaimed Eugene; "it shall by heaven!"

"But, alas!" replied Constantia in an agony of vain regret, "my parents will not be alive to welcome it!"

And, struck with the melancholy truth, her companions answered not.

In conversations like these, evening after evening stole rapidly away; and though neither Constantia nor Eugene any more than Madeleine, was conscious of it, the cause that led them to the cottage, the season, the situation, and the time of their meetings, were fraught with every incitement to love, as ardent as it was rash and hopeless.

Benevolent attention to a lonely and helpless dependent was the cause of their acquaintance; while each, unconscious of the gratified whispers of self-love, admired in the other the kindness which dictated their visits to Madeleine.

The season was a warm and splendid autumn; and as Madeleine's cottage looked into a spacious garden, the sultry breeze, which fanned them through her open lattice, was laden with the delicious fragrance of the orange blossom and other odoriferous plants; while the murmur of distant fountains, and the songs of birds, disposed the mind to a sort of contemplative pensiveness favorable to tender impressions, and induced that still, contented silence, which the full, conscious heart would not violate for worlds. The time was the hour of sun-

set; and Eugene and Constantia, sitting by each other's side, used to prolong their stay by the couch of Madeleine, till the magic shade of twilight stole over the tawny foliage of the garden, and threw a deeper shade over the tall trees of the *Champs Elisées*.

The monotonous murmur of the water falls, the distant hum of men, and the heat of the season, had usually by this time lulled the invalid into a temporary slumber; and Eugene and Constantia, on pretence of fearing to awaken her, used to prolong the silence so congenial to their feelings; while every and anon an unrestrained sigh from Eugene, and a suppressed one from the bosom of Constantia, mingled with the varied sounds of evening, and harmonized only too well with the scene and its attendant circumstances. Nor did they think of departing till Madeleine awoke, and then her attendant was reluctantly summoned by Eugene to wait on Constantia home; for he was forbidden that happiness.

"I have no wealth but an unblemished reputation," Constantia used to observe; "and if a young man accompanied me to my lodging, it would be mine no longer."

This observation was too just to be argued against by Eugene—he sighed and acceded to it; but he used to follow her, apparently unobserved by her, at a respectful distance, in order to protect her from insult, should insult be offered; then he used to return home with a satisfied conscience, and thank God that he had done his duty by watching over a virtuous and unprotected orphan; while Constantia, conscious of his protection, though she chose to seem ignorant of it, used to pour out her heart in thankfulness, on her humble pillow, to that gracious Being who had raised up to her a friend so delicate, so generous, and so true.

But the delusions even of virtue cannot, ought not to last forever, and the truth, the unwelcome truth, soon burst on the minds of the unconscious lovers. One evening, while Constantia was conversing, as Eugene's eyes were fixed on her animated countenance, and she

had discovered that, spite of her former boast, it was no easy task to look in the face of Eugene, even though he did think her parents innocent, and had, therefore, bent her modest eyes to the ground, the too deeply feeling orphan expatiated on the pangs which parents must feel on their death bed, when conscious that they leave their children destitute of wealth and friends, and without the means of procuring either.

"Think," she said, "what my father and mother must have felt, when the thought of my orphan state, and my unprotected, unmitigated misery came over their minds. I witnessed my mother's agonies at the idea, and I only too well could imagine my father's ; "I leave thee, my child," said she, "'tis true, in the protection of heaven ; but then, as in thy father's case, heaven sometimes, for wise purposes, no doubt, allows innocence to pine in sorrow and in pain ; and I know not to what misery I may leave thee ; with no sustenance but what you may wring from a proud, unfeeling relation, or procure by bodily fatigue ; with no friend to console or advise you ; without even the most distant hope that you will ever be able to form a respectable marriage, or even any marriage at all ; for what parent would allow his son to marry the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglades ?"

At these words Eugene started from his seat, exclaiming "Merciful heaven !" then rushed across the room, and, throwing himself on a chair, groaned aloud.

"Are you ill ? For pity's sake answer me !" cried Constantia, following him.

"Ill !" faltered out Eugene ; "yes—I am ill indeed ! But don't alarm yourself ; I shall recover presently."

He was indeed ill, but his malady was of the mind. The words of Madame d'Anglade, which Constantia had related, had wounded him to the soul ; for he forcibly felt the justice of them, and the agony which they inflicted unveiled to him the real state of his heart.

She had said "no parent would allow his son to marry the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglades," and he knew that his father would spurn with indignation the idea of a

connexion so degrading in the eyes of the world ; while he also knew that unless he married Constantia d'Anglade, all his hopes of happiness were vanished forever. Immediately the horror of being perhaps forced to disobey the parent whose slightest wish had been a law to him, till now, and to refuse to marry the woman whom he might design for his wife, overpowered his conscious heart, and made all the dear delusion of love vanish from his eyes.

"What can I do to assist you?" cried Constantia, wringing her hands, in terror, as she gazed on Eugene's pale cheek and disordered mien. "Madeleine," added she, running up to her bedside, "advise me what to do."

But scarcely had she said this, when she uttered a loud scream, for she beheld Madeleine lying insensible on her pillow.

Terror immediately roused Eugene from the indulgence of selfish sorrow, and he eagerly shared with Constantia the task of endeavoring to revive Madeleine ; but in so doing, the tenderness which was then throbbing powerfully within his bosom, and unconsciously within that of Constantia, was perhaps increased. Each beheld the other performing, with eager zeal, the tender offices of humanity and friendship to a poor forlorn individual ; and as each stretched forth the hand in kindness to support the languid head of Madeleine, their arms became united on her pillow, and ever and anon the trembling hand of Eugene grasped the round arm of Constantia. But Madeleine at length recovered, and with her senses instantly returned her consciousness of the feelings which had occasioned her to lose them. Immediately, therefore, looking alternately at her young friends with looks of compassion and anguish, she sighed deeply, and desired them to leave her, as she wished to be alone in order to collect her scattered thoughts, and act as her conscience dictated.

Eugene suspected what she meant ; but Constantia, fearing that her intellects were injured, and that she was dangerously ill, refused to go, and declared that she would watch by her all night.

"I see your friendly intention, and I understand your suspicions," replied Madeleine, observing the look of alarm visible on her countenance; "but believe me, my mind is ill at ease, for so is my conscience. I am convinced that I have acted weakly, if not wickedly, and I must consider on the means of repairing, as much as in me lies, the error which I have committed. O my dear child!" added she, addressing Eugene, "I see, by your downcast eye, that to you my meaning needs no explanation."

Constantia was silent from surprise—Eugene from consternation; and on Madeleine's urging their departure with violent and increasing emotion, they both rose to obey her; but they found that the rain fell in torrents, and to depart was impossible. Accordingly they reseated themselves, and endeavored, as Madeleine declared herself quite well, to resume their conversation; but they tried in vain; Constantia was embarrassed, Madeleine sad and thoughtful, and Eugene seemed a prey to violent uneasiness. At length Madeleine exclaimed—

"Why do you not converse, my children?—Take advantage of the last opportunity which you will perhaps ever have of enjoying each other's society; for here, in this house, after this moment, you will never meet again."

On hearing this strange and unwelcome declaration, both Constantia and Eugene arose, and, hastening to her bedside, demanded an explanation of it. Constantia did so with only a remote and confused notion of the truth; but Eugene was well aware of her motives, and though he lamented, he could not venture to condemn them.

"Alas!" replied Madeleine, addressing Constantia, "see you not, my child, that he, that unfortunate young man, the son of the President des Essars, has imbibed for you, the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglade, a passion as ardent as it is hopeless?—and one of whose existence he was not, I believe, conscious, till you related your mother's dying words, and showed him that to you the happiness of a married life was for ever forbidden by the prejudices of society!"

No sooner had Madeleine uttered these words, than Eugene was at Constantia's feet, alive to no consideration but the pleasure of knowing that she was informed of that ardent love, that hopeless but indelible attachment, which he now knew that he entertained for her, but from duty and timidity would not have had courage to declare to her himself.

But his joy was of short duration ; after a struggle in her own mind between the pleasure of finding herself beloved at the same moment that she had, for the first time, discovered the state of her own heart, and some counterbalancing and painfully oppressive feelings, Constantia clasped her hands mournfully together, and exclaimed—

“Rise, sir, and insult me by that posture no longer ! It is weak, it is criminal, in the son of the President des Essars, to address, in that posture, the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglade. Rise, sir, and hear the determination to which the dreadful necessity of this moment compels me.”

“I will obey you,” replied Eugene, “in order to prove to you my respect ; but surely it is not forbidden the son of any man to love and adore the virtues of Constantia d'Anglade !”

At this moment, and before Eugene had risen from the feet of Constantia, a most unexpected and unwelcome visitor entered the apartment ; and this was the President des Essars himself.

“My father !” exclaimed Eugene, rising ; and Madeleine, terrified and confounded, hid her face on her pillow ; while Constantia, though conscious of innocence, trembled as if about to incur the anger of a just judge.

“So, sir,” said the President, with a forced smile, and in the tone of suppressed indignation, “the length and frequency of your visits here is accounted for ! Who is this lady whose charms have shed a lustre over this humble habitation, which you cannot find in the circles besetting your rank and expectations ?”

“This lady, sir,” replied Eugene, with a pale cheek and a faltering voice, “is Mademoiselle d'Anglade.”

"D'Anglade!" answered the President in a tone of fury—"D'Anglade! what! the daughter of that—"

Here Constantia, restored to all her self-confidence by the dread of insult, suddenly rose, and, interrupting him, exclaimed—

"I will spare you, sir, the guilt of insulting the unfortunate, by removing instantly from your presence. Yes, sir, I am the daughter of the unhappy d'Anglade; and allow me to assure you, sir, that I am also too proud and too conscientious, ever to see your son again, after having been convinced, as I have just been, that my meetings with him are dangerous to his peace, injurious to my own reputation, and odious to you."

So saying, she left the room; while Eugene, who was hastily following her, was forcibly and angrily held by his father.

"She is gone; and I may never see her more!" cried Eugene, sinking into a chair.

"Oh no," replied the President with a sneer, "your convenient friend here, your Madeleine, will no doubt contrive more meetings for you."

"There, my child," said Madeleine, "you see what my fatal blindness and indulgence have exposed me to; but I leave my justification to you—I shall not attempt it. Sir (addressing the President,) it is true that appearances are against me; still you might have been slower to condemn so harshly an old and faithful servant like me."

"Sir," exclaimed Eugene, "I, and I only am to blame."

"Oh! doubtless; it is heroic and proper that you should say so; but follow me home, sir, and there I shall expect a full though not a satisfactory explanation."

Then, without deigning even to look at Madeleine, the President withdrew; and Eugene was preparing to follow him, when Madeleine exclaimed with tears of agony—

"He is gone without speaking to me, or even looking at me, and I see that I have forfeited his favor for ever!"

"No, dear Madeleine," replied Eugene, affectionately pressing her cold hand, "my father may be angry, but

he can never be unjust; and if he renounces you, he must also renounce me."

So saying he departed; and endeavored, as he slowly followed his father, to fortify his mind to endure with composure the awful interview which awaited him. But when they reached the President's hotel, unexpected company was awaiting him there, and Eugene was at liberty to retire to his own apartment, where, for the first time in his life, he ventured to violate the strict obedience which he had uniformly preserved even to his father's slightest will; and being tempted by opportunity, he sat down and wrote to Constantia in language only too expressive of the deep rooted passion of his soul; and having finished his letter, without giving himself time to deliberate, he sent it by a confidential servant to Constantia's lodgings.

That same night, when his guests were departed, the President summoned Eugene into his presence.

"Little did I expect," said the former in a mournful tone, "while I was affectionately yielding to your wishes, in not pressing you to marry because you were at present averse to marriage, that you were cruelly and clandestinely blasting all my hopes, and your own prospects in life, by forming an attachment to the artful daughter of an abject and disgraced being, and a convicted criminal!"

"Forgive me, sir," interrupted Eugene, "if I assure you that the object of my attachment is one of the most artless of human beings; and that, in my opinion, her father was unfortunate only, not criminal, and most wickedly and unjustly condemned!"

"Nay then," exclaimed the President, rising with great indignation, "if this is the case—if this child of shame has such influence over you as to make you doubt the justice of the laws of your country, and blind you to guilt the most manifest, it is time that she should be placed where her power and will to do mischief shall be rendered void; and I will go this moment to obtain a *lettres de cachet*, and have her conveyed to some place of security."

"No, sir," said Eugene, rising also, and speaking in a tone at once firm yet respectful; "no, sir, you will not

do this ; you will not, I am sure you will not do in a passion, what you must repent in a moment of reflection. No, sir, you will not oppress the orphan who has none to aid her, and give your son reason to blush for his father !”

“ Eugene !” cried the President sternly ; but he reseated himself ; “ Eugene,” repeated he, “ till this unfortunate moment I never knew you forget the respect due to me.”

“ True, sir ; for never till this moment did I see you on the point of forgetting the respect due to yourself. O my dear father ! reflect on what you were going to do ! What, you ! the advocate of the poor and friendless ! you, whose name lives in the memory of so many oppressed and indigent people, rescued by your eloquence and activity from undeserved shame ! you, go to solicit a *lettres de cachet* against a helpless orphan, and merely because she has virtues, beauty, and talents, and your son has a heart to value them ! nay, has been taught by you to value them above every thing else ! O, sir, the judge who condemned d’Anglade to the galleys was virtuous, compared to what you would be if you sought to confine this unhappy and friendless daughter ! He thought himself right ; but you, you know that while you were acting thus, your own generous, upright heart would instantly condemn you !”

“ But this girl deserves my anger and my vengeance ; for, has she not inveigled the affections of my son ? She gave the first provocation ; and have I not reason to fear the further artifices and influence of that woman, who can make my son, a youth well studied too in the law of evidence, believe her parents, spite of evidence, guiltless of the crime for which they suffered ?”

“ But what if I was convinced of d’Anglade’s innocence before I ever saw this daughter ?”

“ How ?”

“ Have you, then, quite forgotten, sir, that at the time of the condemnation I told you, like the boy in the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments, had I been the judge, I should have examined the Count de Montgomery’s servants

and chaplain, as he said that he should have examined the olive merchant's; and that I thought, if such an examination had taken place, it would have been proved that d'Anglade and his amiable wife were entirely innocent?"

"I do, I do remember it."

"And do you not also remember, sir, that, though I failed to convince you, you were pleased to say, 'That boy has an active, inquiring mind, and I think he will be an honor to me and his profession?'"

"I do remember that also," cried the President melting into tears, and opening his arms to his son; "but, O Eugene! have I not now reason to fear that my fond foolish hopes are at length completely blasted?"

"Impossible!" replied Eugene, "Impossible! If you do but confide in me, and do justice to the object of my love and adoration—"

"But your love for such an object is itself a crime."

"Impossible! to love virtue is to be virtuous; nor can you require me not to love Mademoiselle d'Anglade. All you can require, or I can grant, is, a promise never to let her influence interfere with my duty; but even to endeavor, some time or other, to fulfil your wishes, and marry the object of your choice."

"And will you promise this?"

"I will immediately promise not to marry Mademoiselle d'Anglade without your consent; but the other promise, till I hear from her, I do not think myself at liberty to make."

"Hear from her! then you own that you have written to her?"

"Yes."

"And am I to look on this voluntary confession as a good or a bad sign? as a proof of obedience, or revolt?"

"As a proof, my dear father, that I mean to be as ingenuous with you as you deserve; and that it shall not be in the power even of love itself to deprive you of that influence over your son's every action, which you have purchased by years of the most tender indulgence and affectionate care."

The president grasped Eugene's hand, but spoke not.

"Do you think that habits of affectionate and most devoted respect and unreserved confidence on my part can be broken through and destroyed at once? Do you think that any passion, however powerful, can make me forego those habits of ingenuousness which have, for years, made your confidence in me equal to your love?"

"Then, wherefore, if those habits still remain, have you clandestinely met Mademoiselle d'Anglade at the house of Madeleine; and why did I find you at her feet?"

This question was most welcome to Eugene; he feared not to meet the inquiry, and had eagerly desired it; then, with the boldness of conscious rectitude, and the eloquence of a virtuous mind unjustly accused, he related every circumstance as it had occurred, and at once justified himself, Madeleine, and Constantia.

When he had finished, the President, smiling through his tears, replied—

"It is well, my child; I see you are unfortunate, but that I have still reason to be proud of you. But why did you write to Mademoiselle d'Anglade?"

"I wrote to calm the apparent agony of her mind, and convince her that my love was as pure and respectful as it was ardent; and then, hurried away by a torrent of irresistible feelings, I told her that, though I knew that she, as well as myself, was too much the slave of duty to make it possible for us ever to be united, I should have a pride and a pleasure in living single for her sake, and should feel comfort in the midst of misery if she would deign to allow me to tender her this promise, and would own that such homage was not displeasing to her."

"Eugene," said the President gravely, but affectionately, "from the answer that Mademoiselle d'Anglade sends to this rash offer I shall know how to estimate her real character; till then, we will drop a subject so painful to us both; and my next care shall be to convince poor Madeleine, that though I cannot acquit her of blindness and folly, I do entirely of aught that is treacherous and dishonorable."

The next day the President wrote most kindly to Madeleine, but Constantia wrote not to Eugene; and another and another day found him anxious, disappointed, and miserable, and his father surprised and suspicious.

At length, however, a packet was given to Eugene while the president was with him, and on opening it, he found that it contained his own letter opened, and a sealed letter directed to himself.

"This is from Constantia, sir," said Eugene, turning very pale; "open it and read it."

"No, my son; I require no such sacrifice."

"It is not a sacrifice; I request this to show you the confidence I have in Constantia's principles, and to convince you that I am sure she can write nothing but what you must approve."

The President smiled half incredulously, and instantly breaking the seal, he read as follows:

"Your letter, sir, has made me some amends for your unexpected and unwelcome declaration to me the last time we met, as it has enabled me to make the only reparation in my power to your father, and your friends, for having excited in you an attachment at once hopeless and disgraceful; and it is the consciousness that I owe to them, and to my own character, this reparation, that emboldens me to violate those rules of propriety dearer to me than life itself, and write a long and even kind answer to a man who, forgetting that to a woman in my situation such addresses are reckoned injurious and insulting, has sent me a letter containing a passionate avowal of love.

"But before I address you on the reparation mentioned above, sir, let me explain to you the cause of the horror which I expressed when the state of your affections was so rashly revealed to me by our misguided friend and yourself. When I found myself a friendless, unprotected orphan—the child of disgrace as well as poverty—and feared that every mind would be prejudiced against me, as well as every heart be shut; I re-

solved so to conduct myself as to live down the prejudices existing against me, and also endeavor to rescue, in a degree, the name of my injured parents from reproach, by proving, by my conduct, that they had given their child the best and most salutary principles of action ; and the conclusion from this, I fondly flattered myself, would be ; ‘ Surely it is more probable that the d’Anglades were unjustly condemned, than that persons criminal as they were should have taught their daughter to love the dictates of virtue and piety so dearly, as to make her walk through the dangers of the world with a reputation unclouded, and a virtue apparently free from stain.’ These blessed hopes supported me through all my sufferings ; and often, very often, have I wetted my pillow with tears of joyful hope, while fancying that my rigid attention to my duties had at length obtained for me this desired reward.

‘ Judge then of my agony when I found that you, the sole heir and representative of an ancient and honorable family, had conceived for me a passion fatal to your own peace, and had exposed me to the certain danger of being looked upon as an unprincipled artful girl, endeavoring to persuade a young and inexperienced man of fortune to commit the rash and disgraceful action of uniting his fate to hers !

“ Instantly I saw the just frowns of your irritated father ; I heard my fame for ever destroyed by the indignant suspicions and busy whispers of your relations ; and all the fond hopes which had supported me with cheerfulness through my sorrows, cruelly and for ever annihilated ! You know what followed ; you know that I *did* see the frowns of your angry father ; you also knew, perhaps, that my fame has been traduced by him and your relations ; but, fortunately, you have put it in my power to defend myself, in a degree, from these attacks, and repair the involuntary fault which I have committed, and I hasten to avail myself of the power which you have given me.

“ You earnestly conjure me to accept your promise

of never belonging to another, as you cannot be mine, and thus I answer you ;—if my miserable and undeserved calamities excite your compassion—if my peace be dear, and my reputation sacred to you—endeavor from this moment to eradicate my image from your heart ; and, instead of promising never to marry, make happy your affectionate father, by promising to fulfil his wishes, and marrying the lady whom he designs for you ! No hesitation ! Do this ; and all the tenderness which a heart long since wedded to its sorrows can feel, shall to its last throbbings be yours.

“To make this task easier to you, I solemnly assure you that, till I am informed of your marriage, you shall not only never see me, but never hear of me again. When you receive this letter I shall be removed far from you, and the place of my abode will be a secret even to Madeleine. But when you have obeyed my wishes, and, happy, envied Eugene, when you have been pressed to the bosom of an affectionate father, and been told by him that you have fulfilled his fondest wishes, and are once more the pride and comfort of his life—why then, perhaps, he and your family may speak kindly of her who used her influence over you for virtuous purposes ; and I may contrive means, consistent with propriety, to send you my blessings and my thanks.

“And now, what remains but that I should bid you a last adieu ? But think not that I find this an easy task. No, generous Eugene ! I owe you an obligation which I can forget only in the grave. You have given me the proud consciousness that, though crushed beneath a load of unmerited obloquy ; though friendless, unprotected, and denied all hope of forming a virtuous connexion, and consequently liable to be the object only of vicious love, there was yet one being noble and just enough to feel for me a passion as honorable as it was ardent, to respect my misfortunes, and to endeavor to alleviate them by attentions at once gratifying to my pride and my virtue ; and, above all, who had a generous pleasure in soothing the wounded feelings of an affectionate child, by pro-

nouncing his conviction of the Innocence of her parents, and of the injustice of that sentence which had doomed them to misery and disgrace !

“ Evenings of happiness, (never to return again !) farewell ! farewell for ever ! but never shall I forget you.

“ Generous Eugene ! my pen still hesitates to bid you a final adieu—but I must write it—Farewell ! And I conjure you, if your dearest pleasure be communicating pleasure to me, make the sacrifice which I require of you ! Let me carry with me wherever I go the consoling consciousness, that my esteem was of such consequence to you, that you were capable of any effort to deserve it ; and that, being as jealous of my reputation as of your own, you were eager to remove the stain your love had fixed on it, by proving to your father that my influence was a virtuous influence ; and that, instead of loosening the bonds of filial piety and duty, it was my pride and my passion to strengthen and unite them still closer.

“ And now, farewell for ever !

“ CONSTANTIA D'ANGLADE.”

It is not to be supposed that the President could read, or that Eugene could hear this letter without many hesitations and interruptions. On the contrary, the President sometimes paused from his own emotion, but more frequently from the overpowering and frenzied emotion of his son ; who, when he found that Constantia was probably gone where he should never see her more, and that her letter was indeed a final farewell, gave way to such extravagant bursts of grief that his father was alarmed both for his life and reason ; but, suddenly recollecting himself, he sought the well earned gratification of hearing his father own that he had done Constantia injustice, and that she was all that his fondness had described her to be.

But the President was a man of the world, and a man of experience ; and, though a good man, a man of prejudices. He was convinced that d'Anglade was a villain, and he felt it difficult to believe in the disinterested virtue of his daughter ; therefore, struggling with his

better feelings, he succeeded in convincing himself that Constantia's letter might possibly be written on purpose for his perusal, and in order to render Eugene's affections more violent, by making it appear difficult, if not impossible, for him to obtain her; and no sooner had this idea entered his head, than, proud of his own sagacity, he cherished it and delighted in it; and while following the train of ideas to which it led, he forgot that Eugene was anxiously awaiting his reply.

"You do not speak! you do not answer me, sir!" cried Eugene; "Is it possible that letter can have failed of effect?"

"There is no doubt of its being written for effect."

"Sir!" exclaimed Eugene.

"I mean that it is very well written; if it be as well felt."

"If it be as well felt!"

"Yes; if Mademoiselle d'Anglade be in earnest—if she is really gone, and has made it absolutely impossible that you should either hear of her or see her again, unless you fulfil the conditions which she prescribes to you—why then I shall believe that her letter is not the result of consummate art; but—"

He said no more, for the countenance of Eugene was such as to silence and to terrify him.

"I go, sir," said Eugene, fiercely approaching him, and in a voice of emotion bordering on frenzy, "I go to discover, this instant, whether Mademoiselle d'Anglade be out of my reach or not; and if she be within it, and her resentment of your cruel, unwarrantable suspicions equals mine—why then, sir, I have no more a country here, and you no more a son."

He would have rushed out of the room; but his terrified, repentant, and self-condemned father seized him as he passed, and, falling at his feet, conjured him with an agony of tears to hear him retract what he had said, and be generous enough to forgive him.

At sight of his father in such a posture, shedding tears of penitence, and addressing him in the language of sup-

plication, the high-raised passion of Eugene subsided, his frenzy yielded to a softer emotion, and, raising his father to his arms, he sobbed out his forgiveness on his shoulder.

When they were more calm, Eugene proposed, and the President dared not contradict him, that they should both visit Madeleine, and learn from her whether Constantia was really gone; and Eugene also made his father promise, that if her journey had been delayed, and she was with Madeleine when they entered the room, he would not oppose his taking love of her in any manner which his feelings should dictate.

They then set off for the house of Madeleine; while Eugene hurried thither, eager to gratify his tenderness, and the President as eager to confirm his suspicions.

When they arrived, they found Madeleine so overwhelmed with affliction that she was scarcely sensible to the joy of hearing the President express himself towards her in terms of unabated affection; and at last she with difficulty informed them, that Mademoiselle d'Anglade was gone she knew not whither, and might not return for months nor even for years.

At this entire annihilation of the faint and ill-founded hope which had hurried him like a maniac along the streets to the dwelling of Madeleine, Eugene sunk in a swoon into the arms of his father, and recovered only to rave in the delirium of fever; while the President, as he watched through many sleepless nights and restless days by the sick couch of his unconscious child, could almost have consented to purchase his recovery from death by consenting to bestow him on the daughter of the infamous d'Anglade.

But Eugene at length slowly and surely recovered; and with his health returned, in all their force, the prejudices of his father. As soon as Eugene was able to go out, his first visit was to Madeleine; and, at his earnest request, she showed him Constantia's farewell letter to herself. It was as follows:

"I am going to leave France, my best friend; and as I am unequal to endure the pang of taking a persona

leave of you, I bid you farewell thus. Believe me, that nothing but the most imperious duty could have induced me to forsake you ; but I have the consolation of knowing that I leave you in excellent hands, and you shall have that of hearing, when you see me again, that I, who now bid you adieu, oppressed by languor, and by unavailing regret, shall probably be invigorated by the consciousness of duties fulfilled, and by the animating whispers of hope. I shall say no more at present ; and indeed your only chance of hearing from me, or of me, during my absence, depends on your beloved Eugene ; when he is married you shall receive some intelligence of me ; but not till then.

“ Let me, however, give you the pleasure of knowing that by the death of the distant relation who has hitherto contributed to my support, I am become rich and independent ; and I beg you to accept the enclosed, as a slight mark of my unalterable friendship and eternal gratitude to you ; more I would send, but that there are claims on my little wealth even more sacred than yours, and I hasten to fulfil them.

“ I am going into scenes of activity, anxiety, and fatigue, and shall probably be absent many months ; but I court, I welcome difficulties. I want to dissipate certain recollections. O Madeleine ! little did I ever think, that any event could make the hardship of my fate appear greater in my eyes than it has always done ; but I was mistaken ; and I have learnt to drink to the very dregs the bitter cup offered to my lips, by the consciousness that I am the daughter of a malefactor.

“ Yet, why should I dwell on the dark side of my situation ? I have some convictions most clear and most soothing to my pride ; and I have also the cheering consciousness, that I can lift up my heart to heaven with the security of innocence, and the firm hope of a sincere and confiding christian !

“ Do not pity, then, my dearest friend, but love me and pray for me ; and believe me, that in sickness and in sorrow, in despondence and in hope, in adversity and

in prosperity, I shall always be your affectionate and devoted child, CONSTANTIA D'ANGLADE."

This letter contained a bill to a considerable amount ; but Madeleine declared that while Constantia was absent she should not have the heart to use it ; and then, as Constantia expected she would do, Madeleine reminded Eugene that, till he was married, she could not hear any news of her absent friend.

Eugene made her no reply then, nor, indeed, at any future time when she made the same remark ; but, in about six months after the departure of Constantia, he informed his father, that he was willing to marry the lady whom he had designed for him

"But, my dear son," cried the President, "are you sure that you can oblige me so far without any considerable effort to yourself?"

"If I did it without an effort," replied Eugene gravely, "it would be no sacrifice, no proof of my devotion to her, whom though I shall never behold, I shall never, never forget ; and therefore I should have less pleasure in fulfilling your wishes than I shall have now."

The President said no more ; but on Eugene's solemnly assuring him that he esteemed his intended wife, and was truly grateful to her for her long attachment to him—an attachment proof even against his coldness and neglect—he presented Eugene in form to the lady and her father, and in a few weeks after, the marriage took place.

But no engagements, either of pleasure or ceremony, could lure Eugene at his stated hours from the couch of Madeleine ; and in a few days after his marriage, "Well, Madeleine, have you any thing to tell me?" was his first salutation to her, and continued to be so for many days, without her being able to give him a satisfactory answer ; at length, however, Madeleine, on his entrance, held out a letter to him ; it had no post mark, and only contained these words—

"I am well—full of business and full of hopes ; and, let me add, I am also full of gratitude to that kind friend who has enabled me, by following the dictates of his duty,

to fulfil mine to *you* ; you shall now hear of my welfare frequently. Tell Monsieur Eugene des Essars *he has my blessings and my thanks*. I can't write more at present, except that I am unalterably yours."

"Thank God, she is well, and perhaps in a way to be happy!" said Eugene, pressing the letter to his quivering lips; "and she remembers me with kindness! and she approves and is grateful for my conduct! Well, then, I ought to be contented! and I am contented!"

But the tears that would course each other down his cheek gave a denial to this assertion, and it was some minutes before he recovered his composure.

"But now, Madeleine," said he, when he had recovered his voice, "I have one more sacrifice to make. My anxiety is now removed; I have seen, in her own hand writing, that she is well and in spirits, and that ought to content me; from this moment, therefore, show me no more of her letters; and, unless any change of importance takes place in her situation, do not even *name* her to me. I am now the husband of another, and of one too whose only fault in my eyes can be, that she is not *Constantia d'Anglade*; and now, Madeleine, I will repeat that name *no more*—I mean, if I can possibly help it."

So saying he departed, and for many months he neither spoke of Constantia nor inquired concerning her; but, as he always knew by Madeleine's increased cheerfulness when she had heard of Constantia, he had less merit in his forbearance than he was perhaps conscious of himself.

But a fatal event at length left him at liberty to talk of Constantia, and to inquire concerning her. His wife died before they had been married a twelvemonth, in giving birth to a son, who followed its mother immediately to the grave.

"O! my dear father," cried Eugene to the President, while they were both sitting beside the corpse of Madame des Essars, "what insupportable misery should I have experienced at this moment, if my conscience did not tell me that I had done my duty by my poor Adelaide,

and that she never had reason to suspect that the image of another was always triumphant over that heart where she alone ought to have reigned ! ”

“ And was it indeed so, my son ? ”

“ It was ; but, indeed, Adelaide was happy, quite happy ; and if I deceived her—surely, surely the deceit was a pardonable one.”

“ But is it possible that neither time nor absence have weakened your unhappy attachment ? ”

“ It is only too true—most true,” replied Eugene ; “ poor Madeleine always said, that if I loved at all, I should love deeply and unalterably.”

“ Madeleine is an old fool,” said the President, and left the room ; but returning again, with every fear and every suspicion again awake now his son was a widower, he asked him whether Constantia was returned, and when he had last heard of her.

“ I have neither heard nor pronounced her name, nor made a single inquiry concerning her, since the first week after my marriage. I had earned, by marrying, a right to hear of her welfare once more, and I did hear of it ; it was enough for duty—she was well, contented and satisfied with me ; and she sent me, according to her promise, her blessings and her thanks ; and from that time forward I forbade Madeleine to name her, and forbade myself to inquire concerning her ; for, was I not the husband of another woman ? ”

The President, on hearing this new proof of the rectitude of his son’s principles, blushed for his late suspicions ; and while, with the mixed feelings of parental pride, of reverence for his son’s virtue, and of regret that it was not in his power to reward it, he wrung his hands in violent emotion, and wiped an involuntary tear from his cheek, he secretly sighed as he thought of the self-exiled Constantia, and wished, ardently wished, that she had not been the daughter of a malefactor.

Eugene was now free again, and could, without any violation of his duty, interrogate Madeleine on the subject nearest his heart. But all he could yet learn of Con-

stantia was—that she was well, and wrote in still unceasing spirits ; but that of her projects and her speculations she still made a mystery even to Madeleine.

“ She grows every day happier, it seems, then,” observed Eugene with a sigh. “ Well, I certainly must rejoice to hear that.”

But he did not heartily rejoice ; nay, certain it is, that Eugene was never so sad as when Madeleine showed him a letter from Constantia ending with—“ and my spirits and my happiness increase daily.”

Yet, in spite of this, Eugene experienced more pleasure from this long forbidden gratification of talking of Constantia than he had known during the connexion which caused him to relinquish it. But duty, imperious duty, was again on the watch to cut off these faint and sickly blossoms of a passion at once hopeless, virtuous, and faithful.

Eugene had been a widower about ten months ; when his father’s health being apparently declining, and the infirmities of age gradually stealing upon him, he was continually lamenting the loss of his son’s wife, who would, he said, have been so tender a nurse and so affectionate a companion to him.

“ And cannot I be your nurse and your companion ?” said Eugene one day, “ and as tender and affectionate as any one can be ?”

“ You are the best of sons, and can and will do all that a man can do on such occasions ; but the gentle offices of watchful tenderness can only be completely performed by the tender assiduity, the inventive love, and unceasing watchfulness of woman. The sick chamber is the province where women shine with unrivalled brilliancy.”

“ Undoubtedly, sir,” replied Eugene, “ and there they possess a superiority over us which they may claim with propriety, and which we may with propriety envy them. For what is more valuable or delightful than the power of alleviating the pains of sickness by incessant and inventive care, and of smoothing even the restless

pillow of death itself by the tender offices of watchful fondness, the ready anticipation of each capricious wish of the sufferer, and that quick comprehension of the meaning of the asking eye and faltering accent, which women so peculiarly possess? Happy sex! while it is ours to destroy, it is theirs to succor and to save."

"Yes, Eugene, it is very true, as I said before, there is no nurse like a woman who loves one; therefore, though I should be pleased to have my declining age watched over by you, your poor Adelaide would have suited me still better."

"Poor Madame d'Anglade was very happy in her nurse," observed Eugene with a sigh; "for her daughter united to her filial love all the essential qualities of female assiduity and skill which we have been naming. I have heard Madeleine relate such instances of the mother's sufferings, which were wholly alleviated by the ceaseless attention of her daughter!"

The President did not at all enjoy this observation, and, with some pettishness, he replied—

"Psha! do you and Madeleine suppose there is only one good daughter in the world? What think you of Madame de Sâde? How tenderly did she nurse her mother, not long ago, in a lingering and painful disease! With what care did she watch over the declining health of her old and peevish husband, whom she married, as you well know, out of pique, because you would not marry her, though both your father and hers were equally desirous of the alliance!"

"Is Monsieur de Sâde dead?" said Eugene turning very pale.

"He is, and Julia a rich and beautiful widow. No doubt you will call on her, Eugene; you owe such an attention to the companion of your childhood, and one who was, you know, intended for your wife."

"She never loved me, sir," replied Eugene; "it was her pride and not her tenderness that was wounded by my indifference; but my poor Adelaide really loved me, and she would never have married an old man out of pique."

"May be so ; but Julia made that old man happy, and nursed him so well—O that I had but such a nurse as she is !"

Eugene instantly left the room, lest his father should speak still plainer ; but he had already spoken plainly enough. Eugene understood him only too well ; and he saw that his past sacrifices to duty had not been judged sufficient, but that his father wished him to become the husband of Madame de Sâde.

He was not mistaken. Though the President, respecting his son's avowed constancy to his first attachment, never openly and directly urged him to address Julia, he was always hinting how happy the man would be who called her wife, and what a nurse she had been, and was capable of being ; and then he used to bewail so piteously his own situation, deprived of all female attendance, except what was purchased from dependent menials, that Eugene's regard for his own peace, and his jealousy of his lately recovered freedom, seemed on the point of vanishing before his sense of filial duty and the empire of filial affection, when, unable to bear the attacks made on him in silence, he summoned up courage to address his father on the subject, and to beg that he would cease to call forth, by hints and insinuations of his wishes, a constant struggle in his mind between the desire of obliging him and the fear of making himself miserable for life, which might in the end be as fatal to his health as it already was to his peace.

"I promise you, sir," added Eugene with violent emotion, "that I will never marry against your inclination ; but, for the sake of pity and of justice, do not urge me to marry again against my own—"

"I never *did* urge you to do so," eagerly interrupted the President.

"No—not *directly* ; but *indirectly* you are continually doing it."

"Well, well—I understand you," answered the President, "and I will endeavor not only not to hint my wishes, but even not to wish at all on the subject ; as your

peace is dearer to me than my own. However, I suppose you have no objection to Madame de Sâde's visiting me now and then?"

"By no means, except she expects me to be always at home to receive her."

The President in this conversation promised well, but how did he perform? His cough, his gout, and his other ailments were sure to attack him when Madame de Sâde was at his house; and while he by this means gave her an opportunity of exerting her nursing abilities in his favor, and of consequently shining in Eugene's eyes, it at the same time put it in his power to exclaim—that he believed her care and assiduity, were they his to command, would lengthen his life some years. In short, the President did not take by storm his son's resolution against marrying, but he carried it by dint of mining. He was not the torrent, sweeping away in one impetuous flood all that opposes it, but he was the slowly yet constantly falling drop, that wears away tardily, yet surely, the stone on which it falls.

"I see—I see," thought Eugene, "that he is declining fast, and let me not be forced to add to the pang of losing him, that of thinking that I refused to grant him the comforts which he desired, and which he imagined would perhaps lengthen as well as charm his existence! No—let me sacrifice myself rather than my father!" Accordingly, he waited on Madame de Sâde, who, as Eugene had reason to suspect, had not visited the President entirely on his own account.

"Julia," said he, scarcely giving her time to recover the confusion which his unexpected appearance had occasioned her, "Julia; presuming on our long acquaintance, I am come to open my whole heart to you; you know, no doubt, that my father most earnestly desires that I should solicit the honor of your hand in marriage?"

"*Your father* desires!" said Julia disdainfully.

"Yes; and if you will condescend to accept my hand, with such a share of my heart as I can offer you, I am yours."

"A *share* of your heart, Eugene ! a share only ! Is the rest buried in the grave of Adelaide ?"

"No—it has been long possessed, and perhaps ever will be, by a living object."

"A living object ?"

"Yes, but one whom I can never marry."

"And you loved her during Adelaide's lifetime ?"

"O, yes."

"And still you made Adelaide happy ?"

"I trust so—though she was never able to make me so."

"No! that was because she did not know how to manage you; such *grandes passions* are like great diseases, formidable and incurable only where the physician is timid and unskilful. Adelaide loved you too well to make herself an object of love to you. Now I do *not* love you, Eugene; I mean, not well enough to be made a fond submissive fool of by you; and therefore I should suit you better than she did. But tell me, is your innamorata young and handsome; I mean, so very, *very* handsome?" added she, stealing a look at the glass, which reflected her own beautiful face and commanding figure to the best advantage.

"She has not your brilliancy," replied Eugene, half smiling, "for sorrow has made her cheek pale, and dimmed the lustre of her eyes; but perhaps it has given her as much attraction as it has deprived her of, for what she has lost in beauty she has gained in loveliness; at least," added Eugene, sighing deeply, "I do not wish her to be otherwise than she is."

"A most lover-like speech, indeed!" cried Julia, drawing up her head; "but who is this wonder, and where does she live?"

"Where she is, I know not; *who* she is, I do not choose that you should know; suffice, that if I become your husband, I shall never see her, hear of her, nor inquire concerning her again. I condemned myself to this strict self-denial while the husband of Adelaide, and I shall certainly not do less for you."

"You shall do a great deal more, Eugene, if you marry me," said Madame de Sade, full of the consciousness of unrivalled beauty and commanding intellect; "you shall not only learn not to see and hear of this paragon, but you shall learn not to *desire* it."

"Indeed! and who will teach me such a lesson? a lesson which at present I do not even wish to learn."

"I will; you have piqued my pride and roused my ambition to succeed where Adelaide failed, and to rob my unknown rival of the heart which she withholds from me. My mourning will be expired in six months, and then I will be yours; and the obstacles that now oppose my conquest shall only serve to make my victory dearer."

Eugene kissed her offered hand in silence, and retired; his heart was too full to speak, for he had succeeded against his wishes and expectations; but his father would be so rejoiced when he heard what he had done! and on that thought only could he bear to dwell. Nor did fancy in that instance surpass the reality. The President was indeed delighted when he heard this new instance of Eugene's filial piety; he laughed, he cried, he blessed him, and declared that he was *sure* Eugene's marriage with Julia would not only comfort but lengthen his life.

"God grant that it may!" cried Eugene; and then he added within himself, "If so, I shall not regret that it will probably shorten mine."

"Madeleine," said Eugene, the next day, while with a cheek paler than usual he seated himself by her bedside, "tell me all you know of Constantia—tell it me over and over again; and during the next six months let us talk of nothing else; for at the end of that time Madeleine, we must talk of her no more, as I am going to be married again; and—"

"Married again! married again!" cried Madeleine in a tone of mournful surprise.

"It is even so," replied Eugene; and Madeleine fell weeping on her pillow. Not that Madeleine owned to herself that she thought it was possible Eugene should

ever be the husband of Constantia ; still, spite of herself, a latent hope had long lurked at her heart, that the two beings whom she most fondly loved would one day or other be happy in each other. But Eugene was about to form new ties ; and when she heard that he was going to marry Madame de Sâde, she exclaimed with unusual acrimony, " So much the worse—I never liked her, I can't endure her, and I will trouble you tell me no more about her."

" I will not," replied Eugene ; " let us, as I said before, talk of Constantia."

" Of her !" said Madeleine, shaking her head ; " Ah, poor love ! Well, well, but God's will be done ! and there is an end of it."

Not long after, Eugene put into Madeleine's hands the following lines, which he had written after his return one evening from visiting the cottage, when the time of day and some other circumstances had recalled the image of Constantia even more forcibly than usual to his mind.

How dear to me the twilight hour !
It breathes, it speaks of pleasures past ;
When Laura sought this humble bower,
And o'er it courtly splendors cast.

Fond fancy's friend, dim Twilight, hail !
Thou canst the absent nymph restore ;
And as around thy shadows sail,
They bring the form I still adore.

Again her pensive smile I view,
Her modest eyes' soft, chasten'd fire ;
And mark her cheek of tender hue
From thee a softer tint acquire.

No eye but mine, in that dim hour,
(Blest thought !) the beauteous maid could see ;
And then her voice, of magic power,
Charm'd with its sweetness none but me.

But now, alas ! to distant plains,
To crowded scenes perhaps she flies ;
She speaks, to charm unnumber'd swains,
She smiles, to bless unnumber'd eyes.

Yet, though before thee crowds may bow,
And thou a fav'ring ear incline,

Think not, sweet maid, their bosoms glow
With love as pure, as true as mine.

Reflect—I knelt before thy feet,
Afraid to speak, or look, or move ;
Nor e'en thy pity dar'd entreat,
For hours—too sure of hopeless love.—

While *they* with bold unfalt'ring tongue
Can all their boasted flame reveal.
But, Laura, spurn the heartless throng ;
They talk of pangs *I* only *feel*.

From glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes,
O turn, my Laura, turn to him
From whose sunk cheek the color flies,
Whose eye with hopeless love is dim.

O turn to me, whose blighted youth
The wreck of former days appears ;
But well the change has prov'd my truth,
And thou wilt own that change *endears*.

Yet no, ah no ; forget, forget
My ardent love, my faith, and me ;
Remember not we ever met !
I would not cause one pang to thee.

And when I hear that thou art blest,
My own distress I'll learn to scorn ;
I'll bid imperious anguish rest,
While smiles my pallid lips adorn.

Deep in my heart the load of grief
Conceal'd from every glance shall lie ;
Till sorrow proves its own relief,
And I shall suffer, smile, and *die*.

Madeleine's hand trembled as she perused these lines ; and bursting into tears as she returned them, she exclaimed, "God grant, my child, that these verses may not be too prophetic, and that thou mayest not die in reality ! for thou art indeed but the shadow of thyself."

"Those verses, my dear Madeleine," replied Eugene, "were the result of feelings which at the time of my expressing them on paper it was not criminal to indulge ; but in a short time it will be my duty to struggle powerfully against them. With my own happiness I might trifle, and give way to the indulgence even of emotions fatal to my health ; but when the happiness of another is in my keeping, trust me, my kind friend, that I shall exert

all the vanished energy of my mind, and not allow myself to sink into the tomb the victim of hopeless, selfish sorrow."

But it is now time to return to Constantia, and explain the reasons which made her quit Paris, and indeed France, so suddenly and unexpectedly.

She had scarcely received the very large legacy of her relation, when she saw the following article in the Dutch gazette :

"Two criminals were lately executed at Rotterdam, one of whom confessed at the place of execution, that he committed the robbery on the Count de Montgommery, for which the Marquis d'Anglade was condemned to the galleys."

To describe Constantia's feelings on reading this, would be an impossible task. At length the long promised moment seemed arriving, and she had now the means in her power of hastening its progress ; for she had money enough to enable her to travel any where in pursuit of evidence of her parents' innocence ; and as a first step towards it, she resolved to set off for Rotterdam immediately. "But let me first," thought Constantia, "impart my hopes to Madeleine, and through her to—" Here she paused ; for she recollected, that it was possible Eugene's passion might lead him to see in her improved prospects a chance of his father's objection to their union being removed ; and therefore, to prevent him from keeping alive his attachment by a hope which she thought could never be realized, she resolved to keep her expectations concealed in her own breast ; and summoning all her courage, she wrote to Madeleine and Eugene, as I have before related. "Now I trust that I have done my duty to the utmost," said Constantia to herself as she seated herself in her travelling carriage, accompanied by an old servant of her deceased relation, who had come to Paris in order to pay her the legacy ; and then wiping an involuntary tear from her eye, she bade the postillion take the road to Flanders.

On her arrival at Rotterdam, she learnt with the most

painful surprise, that the article in the gazette had been an entire forgery, and that no criminals whatever had, at the time mentioned, been executed in that town. Still, all hope was not lost; the person who inserted that article must have had some very urgent motive for so doing, and perhaps was *himself* the criminal, and inserted it in order to throw an impenetrable veil over his fault; while this hope was converted almost into a certainty, by the receipt of an anonymous letter, which was sent after her into Holland, according to the address which she had left. The letter signified, that the person who wrote it, and who had written to the same effect to several persons in Paris, was on the point of hiding himself in the convent of St Bernard for the rest of his life; but before he did so, his conscience obliged him to inform whom it might concern, that the Marquis d'Anglade was entirely innocent of the robbery committed in the apartments of the Count de Montgomery; that the real perpetrators were one Vincent Belestre, the son of a tanner at Mans, and a priest named Gagnard, a native also of Mans, who had been the count's chaplain. The letter added, that a woman of the name of de la Comble could give the most satisfactory information on the subject. (It was afterwards fully ascertained, that a letter of a similar nature had been sent to the Countess de Montgomery, but that she had not generosity enough to make it known.) On receiving this letter, Constantia resolved to return immediately to Paris; and having done so, she set a private inquiry on foot concerning Belestre and Gagnard, who had for some time before quitted the count's service.

In the meanwhile, Constantia determined to go to the convent of St. Bernard, in hopes of prevailing on the person who had written to her, to defer his noviciate, and assist her in bringing the criminals whom he had denounced, to justice.

In this journey, this fruitless journey as it proved, (for no such person as the letter writer had, it appeared, ever been heard of or seen at the convent,) Constantia wasted some months; for the fatigue and cold which she had

endured completely overpowered her frame, which had been weakened by long sorrow and acute anxiety ; and for a long time her life was in such danger, that the unhappy orphan saw herself, as she thought, on the point of perishing in view of that port towards which all her wishes tended ; for she now, with reason, looked on the restoration of her parents' fame as an event that must certainly take place.

During Constantia's absence, her agents found out that Belestre was a consummate villain, who, on account of having been in the early part of his life engaged in an assassination, had been obliged to fly his native place ; that in all the various and vicious vicissitudes of his fortune, he had been intimately acquainted and connected with Gagnard, his countryman ; and that suddenly, from the lowest state of poverty, he had been known to appear in affluence, and had even purchased an estate near Mans, for which he had paid between 9 and 10,000 livres.

Gagnard, they discovered, who was the son of a jailor at Mans, had come to Paris without either clothes or money, and had subsisted on charity, or by saying masses at the St Esprit, when the Count de Montgomery took him into his house. It was impossible that the salary which he gave him could enrich him ; yet immediately after he left the count he was well clothed in his clerical dress, had plenty of money in his pocket, and kept a mistress in very elegant lodgings, on whom he bestowed the most expensive apparel.

These observations alone, had they been made in time, were sufficient to have paved the way to a discovery of the guilt of these wretches, and might have saved the life, as well as re-established the fame, of the innocent and murdered d'Anglades.

This information awaited Constantia on her return to Paris, when, having recovered sufficient strength to be able to travel, she came on the wings of hope and expectation to take decisive measures for fulfilling the eager wishes of her heart. The article in the Dutch gazette, and the anonymous letters, had already completely changed

the public feeling with regard to her unhappy parents; and Constantia had the delight of finding by the journals of the day, that the Parisian world sympathized in her hopes, and was prepared to hail with pleasure the happy hour that should convert them into certainties.

As soon as she arrived, she wrote the following letter to Madeleine, who, though already apprized by Eugene of what was passing relative to the supposed innocence of the d'Anglades, could not read so joyful a letter from Constantia, the late desponding wo-worn, orphan, without an emotion of pleasure almost too strong for her weak frame to support."

"My friend, my comforter, my second mother, I am returning to you at last, as I prophesied that I should do, full of joyful hope and expectation. Every day seems to set in a stronger light the innocence of my parents, and the guilt of the real culprits. But the sword of retributive justice is suspended over their heads, and the fame of their victims is about to be cleared from every stain. This great work accomplished, I shall have lived long enough, Madeleine, and not have lived in vain.

Yours ever faithfully,

The happy

CONSTANTIA D'ANGLADE."

I shall not attempt to describe the various emotions which agitated Eugene on reading this letter, and which precipitated his steps from the cottage of Madeleine into the thickest part of the adjacent forest. Constantia, meanwhile, was closeted with her agents and her lawyers; for as soon as it was known that she had money enough to pay for services tendered and accepted, petitions to be employed in her cause crowded on her from several quarters. The great decisive blow, however, remained still unstruck; for it was not thought that there was as yet sufficient ground on which to take up Belestre and Gagnard for the robbery on the Count de Montgommery; but the persons employed by Constantia kept a watchful eye on them, and at length Gagnard was discovered to have been present at a quarrel in which a

man was *killed*; on this pretence, therefore, he was taken up, and committed to prison; and, providentially as it were, the very day after, a man who had been robbed by Belestre came to Paris in search of him, and, having found him, put him immediately into the hands of the officers of justice.

This was the moment for Constantia to come forward, and the prisoners underwent an examination relative to the robbery for which the d'Anglades suffered; and having betrayed themselves by evasive and inconsistent answers, Constantia Guillemot d'Anglade was bound over to bring proofs that they were in reality the perpetrators of the crime for which her parents had been condemned to the galleys and to prison.

The return of Constantia, and the cause of it, and the evident agitation and interest which it excited in Eugene, alarmed the President considerably, especially when, one day, on asking his son upon what he was so intensely thinking, he coldly replied, "I am thinking of *Made-moiselle d'Anglade*;" and then suddenly withdrew.

Two days afterwards, the President, while Eugene was with him, received a letter, the address of which was, as Eugene instantly saw, in Constantia's hand writing; and pale and trembling he awaited his father's perusal of the contents. The *enveloppe* contained two letters, one of which Eugene recognised as his own letter recently written to Constantia; and he had scarcely recovered his surprise and emotion at sight of it, when the President opened and read the following letter to himself;

"SIR,

"I had the honor to receive yesterday the enclosed letter from Monsieur Eugene des Essars, and I beg that you will have the goodness to dictate my answer to it, assuring you at the same time, that on this occasion I feel myself at liberty to have no will but yours. I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Your obedient servant,

C. D'ANGLADE.

"Felt and written, like herself!" proudly exclaimed Eugene, while the President, with a trembling hand read his son's letter.

"MADEMOISELLE,

"At a time when the innocence of the Marquis d'Anglade and his amiable wife, though clear to you and to me, seemed incapable of being proved to others, you may remember that we indulged ourselves in fancying that the period would arrive, when the proofs which we then despaired of should be made manifest to all the world. 'Should that time arrive,' said I, 'would you accept me as your advocate, and delegate to me the welcome task of clearing your father's fame?' and you flattered me so far as to promise that you would accept my proffered services.

"Mademoiselle, the time is come; and I, whom some late successes of a similar nature have emboldened, now offer myself to be your advocate, and claim your flattering promise.

"My ability you may doubt—my zeal you cannot; but zeal sometimes confers ability, and I need not tell you how sincerely and unalterably I am

"Your devoted friend and servant,

EUGENE DES ESSARS."

"Well, sir—your answer!" cried Eugene, grasping his father's hand with trembling impatience.

"My dear Eugene," replied the President, "if I could be sure that you would be Mademoiselle d'Anglade's advocate only, such is the impression which her noble conduct has made on me, that—"

"Sir," exclaimed Eugene reproachfully, "I give you my *honor* that I shall be her *avowed* advocate only; and I think, sir, you are not now to be convinced that I am incapable of violating my word and my principles."

The President felt the rebuke, and seizing his pen, addressed Constantia in these words:

"MADEMOISELLE,

"I beg you to do my son the honor of informing him, that you accept his proffered services; and now, allow

me to make you also the tender of mine. If my experience can be of service to you, command it to the utmost, either in private or public consultations. Till now, I was convinced of your unhappy parents' guilt ; but now I feel as strongly convinced of their innocence ; for it appears to me an impossibility that any parents, but such as were exemplary in their own principles and lives, could have been blessed with a daughter whose sentiments and conduct are an honor to her sex.

" Believe me, with the sincerest esteem and most grateful respect,

" Your faithful servant,

" VICTOR DES ESSARS."

" Heaven bless you for this !" said Eugene, straining his father to his heart ; " Poor Constantia, how happy will this letter make her ! "

Constantia was indeed gratified by it ; it gratified, as the President well knew that it would, the virtuous ambition of her soul ; and having written to the son a polite acceptance of his offer, she sent the President a warm and grateful one of his.

In consequence of this she called on the latter, a few mornings after, and was ushered into an empty apartment. On the table lay a miniature picture of Eugene, in a shagreen case, and a lock of his hair beside it, as if it was going to be set with it as a present, perhaps, for his intended bride ! A sick and painful feeling came across Constantia's heart as she thought of this, and, taking up the picture, she dropped a tear on it ; while, hurried away by an emotion which she had never before had an opportunity of indulging, she pressed his resemblance by turns to her lips and heart.

At this moment, the President, unseen and unheard, approached her ; but well aware what the object was on which, unconscious that she was observed, she was lavishing such fond caresses, he cautiously and kindly withdrew again ; and then making a great noise to announce his re-approach, he gave Constantia time to dispel her tears, lay down the picture, and prepare for the interview.

"O poor Eugene!" thought the President, while Constantia, in all the bloom of ripened youth, turned round to meet him. The eye which he had before seen dimmed by grief, and bent to the earth by a painful and overwhelming consciousness, or turning on him the cold chilling glance of pride and desperation, now beamed on him with all the lustre of ardent hope and grateful complacency; and the pale sunk cheek of early and ceaseless sorrow, was now suffused with the brightest carnation, and rounded by the hand of health.

Few persons are fully aware of all their own motives of action. When the President offered his services to Constantia, he thought that his motives were wholly disinterested; but he deceived himself. He was not aware that he hoped, by making himself a party in her cause, to acquire a right to be present at her interviews with his son; and now that he beheld her in all the radiance of youth and beauty, he could not help saying within himself—"It is as well, perhaps, that their meetings will take place under the restraint of my presence."

During their conversation he was called out of the room, and, before he returned to it again, his curiosity was excited to know what use Constantia would make of his absence, and whether she would again caress the picture of Eugene. Accordingly, he observed her from a little window in a closet adjoining, and saw her not only again gaze on the picture, but steal a small lock of the hair beside it, which she carefully concealed in her bosom.

"Poor thing," thought the President, as he re-entered the apartment, "how tenderly and truly does she love him! and yet she desired *mé* to dictate her answer to his letter! Noble minded girl! would that thy unfortunate parents were alive to glory in a child like thee!"

The conference was short; but it left a pleasing impression of each on the mind of the other. But while Constantia felt rejoiced at being able to like the father of Eugene, the President was not at all rejoiced at seeing so much to admire in the daughter of d'Anglade; and he dreaded her increased influence over his son, when

he should behold her more powerful than ever in the improved beauty of her appearance. But from that he had nothing to fear. Constantia, pale and wo-worn, was the object who had first interested and then captivated him ; and, therefore, though Eugene might rejoice in her heightened bloom and increased animation, as proofs of her recovered happiness, Constantia, looking as she did when he first saw her, would have been an object more dangerous to him than as she now appeared. But whether her cheek was pale or glowing, her eye bright or tearful, was a matter of indifference ; Constantia was still herself—the innocent sufferer from a father's wrongs—the intelligent companion—the pious child—the active friend, and the noble minded, virtuous woman, whose conduct had been such as to wring even from the prejudiced heart of his father the warmest tribute of admiration.

At length, in presence of the President, Constantia and Eugene had their first meeting on business, and Eugene had prepared a friendly but reserved welcome and congratulation, with which he meant to address her ; while Constantia had intended to be very civil, but rather distant. But the heart laughs at set forms, and scorns all dictates but its own ; as soon as Eugene beheld Constantia, and Constantia beheld Eugene, the studied speech was forgotten, the studied manner laid aside. Eugene said nothing, but imprinted a long long kiss on her hand ; while Constantia, full of emotion, forgot in her confusion that it was she who was arrived, and not Eugene, and in faltering accents told him he was welcome to Paris.

The President meanwhile looked very grave, and began to repent that he had allowed Eugene to be the advocate in Constantia's cause ; but his good feelings at length conquered his weak ones, and in an hour's time Constantia was able to state her case with some clearness, and Eugene to answer so as to be understood.

But Eugene discovered at length, after several conferences, that he was too much taken up with the charms of his client to do her cause justice ; he also found that, as an engaged man, he could not with strict honor allow

himself so many opportunities of being with a woman to whom every faculty of his soul was devoted. "If I continue to see her thus," cried Eugene, "I can never marry Julia de Sâde." Immediately therefore he begged leave to associate a young counsellor of his acquaintance to his labors; and reserving his own strength for the time of the trial, he delegated to his friend the dear but dangerous occupation of meeting Constantia, and receiving her informations and instructions—while he allowed himself to join the consultations only when his presence was absolutely necessary. But it was not in his power to keep this resolution as he at first intended; he soon thought his presence necessary much oftener than it was, and even if love had allowed him to absent himself, jealousy would not; for it was not long before he discovered that while endeavoring to preserve himself from danger, he had unconsciously insured it to his friend, who was young, noble, rich, and amiable, and whose father might not, perhaps, have any insurmountable objection to an alliance with Constantia, when her parents' innocence was made known to the world.

Still, in spite of jealousy, in spite of every thing, Eugene was happy while he saw and heard Constantia; for he soon was convinced that, though Coulanges loved her, she regarded him with perfect indifference; while, though she rarely spoke to him, and never looked at him except when his eyes were averted, his penetration, quickened by love, told him that Constantia's heart sympathized in some degree with his.

At length the time appointed for the trial arrived, and all Paris interested itself in the event. One of the principal witnesses, who had voluntarily waited on Constantia, and came forward to prove the guilt of Gagnard and Belestre, was l'abbé de Fontpierre, a man who had once belonged to the association of thieves of which Belestre was a member; and he declared himself, at the same time, to be the author of the anonymous letter to Constantia, and of the other letters of a similar nature which had been received by the Countess de Montgom-

mery and others; letters generously designed by him to rescue the name of the innocent from undeserved calumny, and lead to the discovery of guilt.

Happy would it be for society if all writers of anonymous letters were actuated by motives as pure and honorable as those of this repentant sinner! But, for the most part, the pen of the anonymous letter writer is held by a hand that would, but for the fear of the law, delight to wield the stiletto of the assassin; for in his heart lurk feelings the most terrible and depraved, while he cruelly calumniates the unoffending innocent, by accusing them, either to themselves or others, of crimes the most abhorrent to their natures, and pores over his baneful manuscript with the grin of a fiend, as he thinks that he is about to impel a poisoned arrow into the breast of those who never perhaps even in thought offended him.

But to return to the abbé de Fontpierre; who, having declared that after the death of d'Anglade his conscience reproached him with being privy to so enormous a crime, swore that he knew Belestre had obtained from Gagnard impressions of the count's keys, in wax, by which means he had others made that opened the locks. He said, that being, soon after the condemnation of the Marquis d'Anglade, in a room adjoining the one where Belestre and Gagnard were drinking together, he heard the former say to the latter, "Come, my friend, let us enjoy ourselves, while this fine fellow, this Marquis d'Anglade, is at the galleys!" To which Gagnard replied, with a sigh, "Poor man! I cannot help being sorry for him; he was a good kind of man, and was always very civil and obliging to me." On which Belestre exclaimed, with a laugh, "Sorry! what, sorry for a man who has secured us from suspicion, and made our fortunes!"

It would be tedious and unnecessary to repeat any more of the conversation held by these two wretches, and related by Fontpierre; I shall only say, that every word of it served to confirm the innocence of d'Anglade, and the guilt of the prisoners.

The next witness, De la Comble, deposed that Beles-

tre had shown her great sums of money, and a beautiful pearl necklace; and when she asked him how such riches and such pearls came into his possession, he answered, that he had won them at play.

These, and many other circumstances related by this woman, confirmed his guilt beyond a doubt; besides, in his pocket was found the Dutch gazette which led Constantia to Rotterdam, and in which, no doubt, he had himself caused to be inserted, that the men who had committed the robbery for which the Marquis d'Anglade had been condemned, had been executed in Holland for another crime; hoping, probably, by this means to stop all further inquiry on the subject, should any of his confederates, in process of time, be induced to inform against him for the manifold atrocities which he had committed.

A letter from Gagnard was also found upon him, giving him notice of the reports which had been spread through Paris by means of the anonymous letters, and desiring him to contrive some method to quiet or get rid of the abbé Fontpierre.

There was other evidence as strong against these abandoned men as what I have detailed above, but I shall not trouble my readers with it; suffice that the evidence against the prisoners appeared so conclusive, that they were condemned to death, and these two wretches at length terminated their existence on the scaffold.

Belestre endured the rack without divulging any thing; but he confessed all his crime before his execution, and said that his confession was only to relieve his oppressed conscience, since God alone had seen him, and Gagnard and himself only knew what had passed.

The rack forced from Gagnard, on the contrary, a complete avowal of his criminal plans and of his crime. He even said, that if the lieutenant-criminel had interrogated him when he was on the premises where the robbery had been committed, he was so confused and alarmed that he should have confessed every thing.

There was therefore now no longer any doubt of the innocence of the Marquis d'Anglade and his amiable wife ; and it was decreed that Constantia should obtain letters of revision of the sentence against her deceased parents, the execution of which parliament reserved to itself.

While the real criminals were, on the clearest conviction of their guilt, condemned to death, and the innocence of the d'Anglades publicly declared and established, Constantia, with a beating heart, was awaiting the decision in a room adjoining the court. At length she heard a quick and well known step, and in another moment Eugene entered to announce the condemnation of the prisoners, and the entire exculpation of her parents. But he was too agitated to speak himself, and the President, who had followed him, was obliged to speak for him.

Constantia instantly fell on her knees, and, raising her fine arms to heaven, exclaimed, " My God, I thank thee !" Then rushing into an inner apartment, she shut herself from the sight of every one, in order to vent the agony which she experienced, even in the midst of her joy, when she reflected that her injured parents were not alive to see their honor vindicated, and their innocence proved.

Deep and bitter must that regret have been ; but religious hope, and habitual resignation to the divine will, succeeded at length in calming her feelings ; and

" While her eye to heaven she raised
Its silent waters sunk away."

She then returned to her expecting friends with calmness, and even with smiles.

The Baron de Coulanges, the father of Eugene's coadjutor in the cause, had, in the meanwhile, been informing the President that Constantia, in her endeavors to obtain justice to her parents' memory, had expended the whole of the property so lately left her, and was reduced to a state of indigence even more abject than she had known before. He was proceeding to point out the neces-

sity there was that she should immediately sue the count, in order to obtain restitution of the sums which her father had been unjustly condemned to pay him, when Constantia re-entered the room, and with grateful earnestness thanked Coulanges and the President for their kind exertions in her favor.

She then turned to Eugene in order to thank him; "But what shall I say to you?" she began, but her voice failed her; the hand which she stretched out to grasp his, fell nerveless by her side, and, unable to utter a word more, she burst into tears, and again quitted the room.

When she returned, the Baron de Coulanges asked her if it was true that she had left herself entirely destitute.

"It is true," she replied; "but I welcome poverty and industry! I could endure them with cheerfulness even while I knew that I was apparently the child of disgrace; but now that I have the consciousness not only of my own but my parents' admitted intemperance to support me, believe me, that riches and poverty are to me equally matters of indifference."

"Young lady," said the President, "your mind, at such a moment as this, is and must be on *stilts*, and you cannot tell yet what its natural and true height is; therefore I must venture to tell you, that when you demand of parliament a public justification of the memory of your parents, it is your duty to bring an action for costs of suit and damages against the Count de Montgomery."

"Sir," replied Constantia, "is it not true that the count, from his extravagance, is greatly involved in pecuniary difficulties?"

"It is."

"Then let the Count de Montgomery know," she answered, "that I will *not* prosecute him. Tell him that the man whom he persecuted, and whose sufferings he gazed on with pleasure, taught his child to return good for evil, and to practise as well as to profess christianity."

"You are an excellent creature," replied the baron, wiping a tear from his eye, "only rather too heroic and

romantic ; and that will go off in time, and then we will talk further on this subject. In the meanwhile, as we are now alone, at least as none are present but our friend the President and his amiable son (for Coulanges is gone off on purpose,) let me prefer a suit to you, in the success of which my heart is deeply interested. Mademoiselle d'Anglade, I will not offend your modesty so far as to expatiate on your admirable conduct, in all the trials and situations in which you have been placed ; but I must beg leave to say, that the proudest man in France might glory to call you daughter-in-law—assured that the exemplary child must make an exemplary wife.”

Here he paused ; while Eugene, anticipating what was to follow, hid his face with his hand, Constantia trembled, and the President cast his eyes on the ground.

“ Now, then,” continued the animated old man, “ let me inform you, that my son has just declared to me that he entertains for you the most ardent attachment ; and let me say, for myself, that if you will favor him by accepting his hand, and admitting his addresses, you will be at once the pride and pleasure of his life and of mine.”

Constantia listened to this honorable testimony to her virtues with modest pride, and was certainly flattered by the offer of the hand of a young man of Coulanges' rank and talents ; an offer too made to her by his father, a man respected even more for his virtues than his birth. But her heart rejected the offer ; and as she timidly cast her eyes on Eugene, and saw him agitated almost to fainting, she thought how easy the task of refusal was ; but she felt it to be a hard task to wound the feelings of an amiable young man who loved her, and of an affectionate parent eager for the welfare of his child ; but then she knew that Eugene tremblingly awaited her answer ; and gratefully, delicately, but firmly, she declined the baron's proposal, and declared her fixed resolution never to be the wife of any man.

As she ended, again her eyes wandered towards Eugene, and her heart throbbed with pleasure as she beheld the instantaneous change from wo to joy which his countenance exhibited.

‘Is this your final resolve?’ said the baron.

‘It is.’

‘Alas, my poor son!’ said the baron; ‘but you will allow him to see you, and endeavor to mollify your flinty heart! or is it already too tender?’

When, seeing Constantia turn alarmingly pale, he paused, and added—

‘But this is an inquiry I have no right to make;—so, heaven bless you, young lady! and if it be not my son’s lot to make you happy, may it be that of some other man!’

So saying he departed; and Constantia, eager to be alone, ordered a *fiacre*, rather than accept the President’s offered carriage, and was conducted to it by him in a sort of perturbed silence on his side, and a thoughtful one on hers.

At length shew as alone, and could breathe out, before the image of her saviour, the devout and grateful offerings of her pious heart. That duty performed, she revolved over in her mind all the late interesting events which had occurred to her, and wondered that the entire success which had crowned her wishes had not made her completely happy.

She used to think, that could she but live to see her parents’ fame entirely cleared, she should, after having conquered certain painful regrets, be the happiest of the happy.

‘But, alas! their fame is cleared, their innocence re-established, and yet I am unhappy!’ Immediately after she caught herself exclaiming—‘Alas! now the trial is over, I shall see HIM no more!’

The next day Constantia beheld her humble door crowded with visitors; her story and her virtue had interested, her success had delighted, and the fame of her beauty had attracted, the feeling, the benevolent, the rich, and the powerful; and to the daughter of that d’Anglade whom many of them had condemned with eagerness, and calumniated without any remorse, they were anxious to shew that countenance, that interest, and that protec-

tion, which, had it been shown to her unfortunate and injured parents, might have led to a less hasty examination of the evidence of their guilt, and have induced the ministers of the law to delay their cruel sentence, till the representations of the innocent had been heard, and pronounced to be founded on justice.

But their visits were paid in vain—Constantia was denied to every one; and when she saw amongst the list the names of many who had been the associates of her poor father in his prosperity, but had forsaken him in his adversity, and seemed eager to fix on him the charge for which he so unjustly suffered, she mournfully exclaimed:

“No—never shall the child of d’Anglade associate with such as these! My father once courted, and thought himself honored by their notice; but he has left me the sad legacy of his experience, and I will confine myself to the safe and preferable society of my equals. I will court no society but that of Madeleine, of that kind being who loved me, and did my parents justice when the world frowned on us, and who now sympathizes as sincerely in my joy as she did in my sorrow. No, dear Madeleine, henceforth I will associate with no one but thee!”

Constantia did not say, or perhaps she was not aware, why Madeleine’s society was so exclusively the object of preference. She thought, perhaps, that gratitude only led her to love so fondly the kind hearted invalid; she seemed not to remember that the cottage, and Madeleine herself, possessed a charm for her peculiar to themselves; for in the cottage she used to see Eugene, and Madeleine was his dearest friend, while the suggestions of love lurked under the seeming whispers of gratitude.

Meanwhile Eugene was even more unhappy than Constantia. He was not only to behold her no more, but he was going to enter into an engagement to live with and marry another woman! and that too when he had reason to believe that she in a degree returned his passion.

Full of these mournful thoughts, he was sometimes on the point of throwing himself at his father's feet, and conjuring him, if he would not allow him to marry Constantia, not to have the barbarity to insist on his marrying another ; but then, the next minute, perhaps, when he heard his father cough, or complain of his increasing weakness, and earnestly wish that his daughter Julia was come home to him, his courage forsook him, and all selfish considerations were lost in the whispers of filial affection.

Eugene had not hitherto, since the trial was over, ventured to call on Madeleine, lest he should meet Constantia there—not only because he knew that the sight of her would increase his torture at the idea of his approaching marriage, but because, on pretence of wanting to speak to her on business, he had dared to follow her thither a few evenings preceding the trial, and had been forced to withdraw again immediately to avoid Constantia's anger ; who told him that morning was the hour for business, and that the place in which she considered it was proper for him to consult with her, was the *study of his father*.

Eugene, awed, piqued, yet more full of admiration of Constantia than ever, in respectful silence obeyed her commands, and departed ; but stealing a look, as he passed the window, in at the open casement, he felt comforted on beholding Constantia weeping almost convulsively on the arm of the chair on which she sat ; “ she loves me,” thought Eugene, “ and her severity is only a proof of her virtue !”

But though he was disposed to respect the rigidity of Constantia's principles, and his own feelings, and therefore resolved not to attempt to see her alone again, or even with no other witness than Madeleine, Eugene could not endure the idea of beholding her no more before he became a husband ; and therefore, in hopes of seeing her, requested his father to accompany him to Madeleine's cottage ; and the President cheerfully complied.

Eugene's expectations were not deceived. On enter-

ing Madeleine's apartment, they beheld Constantia, pale and dejected, sitting by the side of her friend, to whom she had been unburthening her distressed heart, and reproaching herself as an unnatural child, for not being more elated now justice was done to her parents' memory.

At sight of the President and Eugene, she rose, blushing and embarrassed; nor was the latter more at ease than herself; but he was a little relieved by the diversion Madeleine gave to his thoughts, by seizing his hand, pressing it to her quivering lips, and exclaiming—

"I have heard of your eloquence, and God bless you for it, my child! for never was it exerted in a more worthy cause!"

"Never in one so dear to my heart," replied Eugene.

And Constantia thanked him by a look which worlds should not have purchased from him.

At length, being all seated by the bed of Madeleine, they endeavored to enter into conversation; but they found not their thoughts at their post; some of them were wandering over forbidden, indeed, but delightful ground. Constantia felt how dear to her was the presence of Eugene, how instantaneously his presence could dispel her cares; and Eugene, satisfied with being near her, even forgot that he must soon behold her no more, and gave himself entirely up to the enjoyment of the moment.

Madeleine was thinking what a happy, well matched couple Eugene and her young friend would be, and how cruel and wicked it was in any one to oppose their union; while the president—(but what engrossed his thoughts and unfitted them for leading to conversation, will appear by what follows)—"Mademoiselle," said he, gravely addressing Constantia, "I wish to know, whether, on mature reflection, you do not see reason to repent the rash and ill advised rejection which you gave to my friend the baron's flattering proposal."

"No, sir—I have not, nor ever can repent it," she replied eagerly, and almost indignantly; "Monsieur de Coulanges is wholly indifferent to me, and ever will re-

main so ; nor can any consideration of rank and fortune induce me to give my hand without my heart."

"Perhaps you object to the married state itself? I think you said you would never marry?"

"I did say so," said Constantia, "and depend on it, sir, I shall keep my resolution."

"Then I fear, madam, I too must plead for an unfortunate in vain. I, too, have to offer you the hand of a young man, equal in birth and fortune to him whom you have rejected; but I see that you are resolved to be cruel to every one, and that my friend has no chance."

Eugene could scarcely support himself under this new trial. His father, though aware of the state of his heart, soliciting Constantia in his presence to marry another, was insupportable to his feelings; nor was Constantia less moved; but with considerable effort she replied, "To reject the love of any one who has requested and obtained the honor of your interference, sir, is particularly painful to me; but I beg you to inform your friend, that I will never marry any one, never—never!" Here unable to restrain her emotion any longer, she leaned her head on Madeleine's pillow, and gave way to an agony of grief; while Eugene, pleased, pained, wretched, yet contented, stood gazing on her in silent fondness.

"If this be your firm resolve," said the President in a faltering voice, (who now began to believe that he had been acting foolishly, if not cruelly,) "I shall have reason for regret, eternal and unavailing. But I am a bad pleader for a young and impassioned man; he may perhaps succeed better for himself. Now, Eugene, try your powers of persuasion—fall at her feet, and tell her, my dear child, to have compassion on the father and son too, and make me happy in her as a daughter, and you happy in her as a wife."

Eugene, scarcely believing what he heard, yet too happy to allow himself to doubt that he heard aright, was in an instant at the feet of Constantia, who, agitated and overcome with emotion, was for a few moments insensible to all that passed; while Madeleine, terrified

at her situation, declared that the President relented too late, for that the joyful surprise had certainly killed her. But Constantia had known sufficient trials, and she was reserved for recompense and happiness.

"Constantia!" cried Eugene, "must I too plead in vain? will you indeed and in truth never be the wife of any man?"

"I will never be the wife of any man but you," she replied; and the President held her to his bosom with the affection of a father.

"But, sir," said Eugene hesitatingly, "Julia—Madame de Sade—"

"She is acquainted with every thing, and approves every thing; your previous ingenuousness had made my task easy. And now, my children," added he, "you have nothing to look forward to, I trust, but peace and happiness; therefore, forget your past troubles; or, if you remember them, be it only to heighten by contrast your present enjoyments."

"Constantia," cried Eugene, as they stole from their guests on their wedding day to pay their accustomed visit to Madeleine, "be it our boast, that though to our duty we were long forced to sacrifice our love, it was at length given us as our reward, to be able to gratify at once both LOVE AND DUTY.*

* It is a well known fact that Mademoiselle d'Anglade married Monsieur des Essars, *conseiller au parlement*.

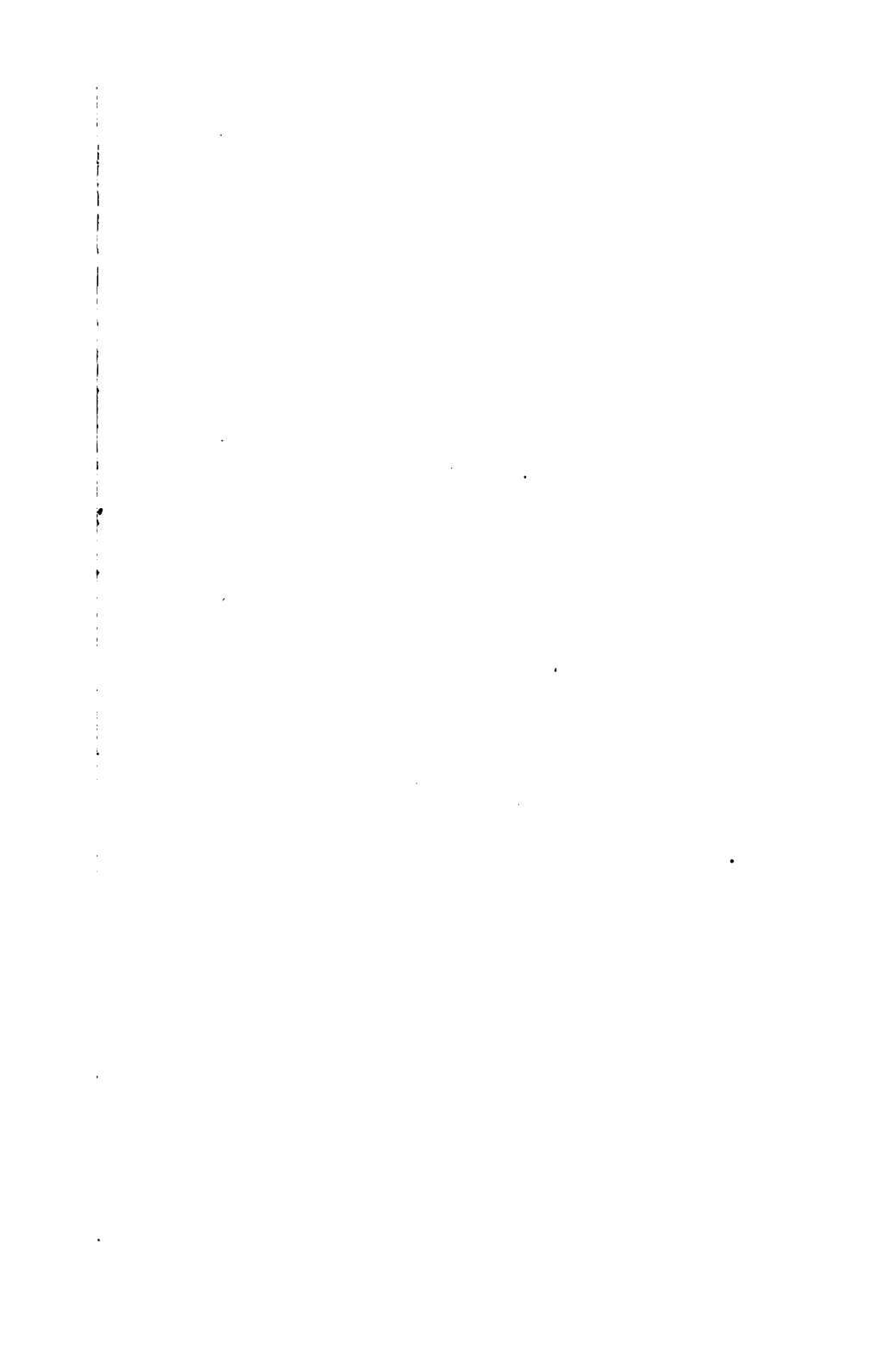
NOTE.

After I had nearly finished this tale, I found that a celebrated writer, Mrs CHARLOTTE SMITH, had translated the trial of d'Anglade, and published it in her selection from the *Causes Célèbres*, called "The Romance of Real Life;" and to that interesting selection I refer my readers for the true relation of those incidents which I have occasionally altered to suit my purpose.

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